

Chapter 1

The Girl Who Lived

James and Lily Potter stared in horror as the wards surrounding their house went down; their first thoughts were that Peter had betrayed them. Panic quickly setting in, James turned to his wife pleading with her to get the twins and run so they would be saved.

"Lily, save yourself and our children. Please for me leave." The pleading in his voice echoing the seriousness of their situation.

Not wanting to abandon her husband Lily argued that she would not leave him. If they were going to die they would die together. Unfortunately for them Lily's protests wasted valuable time as at that moment the front door blasted off its hinges. Standing in the doorway with gleaming red eyes was a tall cloaked figure. Lily screamed the realization of their situation dawned on her as they went into self defence mode.

She and James threw spell after spell at the intruder. But their attempts were useless as he just brushed every spell off as if it were dust. James begged his wife to take the children and run. Like the stubborn woman she was she refused again. James lost his concentration for a split second and that was all the time needed as Voldemort stunned him.

"JAMES!"

Lily cried out knowing there was nothing that she could do for him now, making a dash to escape she quickly dodged any curses that were flying at her. She ran to the stairs. As Lily placed her left foot on the bottom step she felt a searing pain and then numbness in her back, she had been stunned.

Voldemort laughed menacingly, and then approached Lily. He bent over her and sneered as he spoke. His voice so cold and cruel it surely would have sent shivers down your spine if you had been there.

"I will deal with you later witch, it's your spawn I will kill this night." Voldemort spat out as he ascended the stairs in search of the Potter family nursery. Effortlessly he brought down the protective wards that guarded the door. He glided in, similarly to a Dementor, to where two children lay.

The little boy looked on unimpressed by the figure approaching, his sister however was terrified and clung to her brother for comfort. Lily and James Potter had had twins earlier that year a boy and a girl, they named the boy Harry and his sister Jamie. Jamie did not like the snake like figure lurking over their crib.

"So *you* are the one that destiny has decreed will be the demise of me? Too bad I cannot have you as an ally. But you would become be too powerful and I simply cannot have that." Voldemort hissed.

"Say goodbye to your brother little girl."

He pointed his wand at the crib as he spoke the most deadly of all the unforgivable curses. "Avada Kedavra."

Green light shot out of Voldemort's wand straight at Harry. All of a sudden, taking Voldemort totally by surprise, it rebounded off him crashing back through the bars of the crib breaking three of them and hit Voldemort square in the chest.

Agonized shrieks filled the air, Voldemort crashed down against the crib fire burning beneath his skin.

"No! Curse you boy." Realizing that his own spell was seeping into his veins he forced his magic to seal itself into a non-corporeal form. A black mist rose from the ashes of Voldemort's previous body. It did not take long for Dumbledore to appear. He had been alerted when the Potter wards fell. The children's parents who had now been enervated burst into the nursery.

Harry was unconscious with a scar on his forehead. His sister who now had a jagged scar on her chest just above her heart where the broken wood had pierced it was screaming in the crib.

Dumbledore, the doddering old coot who was the headmaster at Hogwarts School made a snap decision just then. It was widely anticipated amongst those in the Order that the person to vanquish the Dark Lord would be born to a half blood wizarding family and that child when they had defeated him would be left with Voldemort's mark. The highly respected Divination teacher, Professor Trelawney had prophesized it.

The scar was there, the child must be the 'child of prophecy' he picked up the saviour of the wizarding world, turning to Lily and James who were wondering where the snake man had gone and pronounced, "I present to you, Jamie Potter, The Girl Who Lived!"

Being totally money driven and publicity hungry, as all Potters before them had become, they embraced their new celebrity, ignoring the son they also had, the son with the burning lightning scar in his forehead, the son that was now awake and had tears running down his cheeks, it would unfortunately be that way for Harry for many years to come.

5 Years later.

Harry sat alone in his room reading again. He had no company at all and decided from an early age that this was probably for the best. He had taught himself how to read using his parents' old school books when he was 4 years old with the help of the house elves who pitied him.

By now he had gone through and memorized their first-year books from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and was starting on second-year. He had started to hate his parents with a passion since that first year of neglect. He didn't understand why he was no longer loved or accepted. He was simply ignored. Harry had given up on his parents and decided he would make them see. He would show them all. He would prove himself to be the best wizard the world had seen and gain the respect he deserved.

He had loved his sister at first but as the years grew on she became selfish and spoiled, the fame went to her head. Now the chubby 6 year old was craving every ounce of publicity as much as her stupid star struck parents, the more tabloid inches dedicated to 'The Girl

Who Lived' the better. It seemed that Jamie and the elder Potters couldn't get enough. It got to a point where if asked about their family, they simply glossed over the fourth member. It was as if Harry wasn't even there.

Today was his birthday, and like all the other birthdays he'd had he was alone. Nobody had come to see him. His parents, godfather, their partners and guests were all downstairs with his 'twin' sister exchanging presents and generally having a good time. They had forgotten he existed and lounged in the living room singing happily.

Faintly Harry could hear the singing. That awful singing hurt as much as it angered him. "Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday dear Jamie! Happy birthday to you!"

Harry curled up in a corner with one of his books and swore he would get even with them all.

Harry had become close friends with the house elves who were the only family he had. One day he had foolishly wandered off and had gotten lost. It took two days to find his way home, when he did he was dirty and had scratches on his body. Nobody apart from the house elves had noticed his absence. Harry constantly thought to himself that the Potters were the worst sort of people one could ever wish to meet.

Harry sighed, another birthday forgotten. His godfather, Sirius Black, had forgotten that Harry even existed. He only saw Jamie. His lover Remus, who was a werewolf, adored Jamie and did not care either way if Harry was alive or dead. He had cared once though, he had been brainwashed like all guests into forgetting about the little boy in the corner. It had proven true as well.

They had looked at him oddly one time he had come downstairs and asked him who he was. After that Harry made it a habit to avoid them. He despised his family; they were quite different than him. While his family loved the fame and reporters he loathed what that need for fame did to them. He was happy that the wizarding world along with his family seemed to have forgotten he existed. Harry hated loud noises and preferred spending time reading or studying. He would let others chase the flash of a camera.

Pain and disappointment over years of being unloved and ignored had forced Harry to decide that he would always have his guard raised. He would never let anyone get close to him, for they would just break his heart. On his sixth birthday Harry made decisions as if he were twice his age, but then again he was a remarkable boy in his own right.

He looked up at the sound of a **pop** and smiled when he saw it was Knobby the house elf.

This house elf had tutored him in cooking, grooming himself and the importance of personal hygiene, and table etiquette. Knobby had been in service to another wealthy wizarding family for centuries before he was given to the Potters as a gift five years ago and quickly developed a strong friendship with the boy, just like he had with his old master's son. Harry's smile got wider when he saw a large slice of chocolate cake on a plate in Knobby's hand with 6 candles in it.

"Happy birthday Master Harry, Happy birthday Master Harry, Happy birthday Master Harry, Happy birthday to Master." Giving a sheepish grin as he wasn't quite sure of the song, wizard lyrics never really made a lot of sense to him. "This is from all elves Master Harry sir; they say Happy Birthday to you." Knobby said happily.

Giving Knobby a huge hug that took the house elf by surprise he took the cake and happily said. "Thank you so much Knobby, it's the best birthday present that I could have ever hoped for." Harry continued to eat in joyful silence, savouring every morsel of the delicious cake. Harry finished his cake and book then went downstairs for some fresh air. As he was passing the family room his sister cried out.

"Mummy, Daddy, he's ruining my birthday, I thought you said he wouldn't come downstairs? He didn't even buy me a present."

"Boy, stop right there!" James yelled to his son.

Harry turned around and stared at his father. "Yes?"

"Why did you not get your sister a present?" He asked coldly.

"How was I supposed to do that? I don't have any money do I?" Harry said quietly not wanting to anger his father.

Lily spoke just as coldly as her husband. "Then you could have stayed in your room and not bothered her on her birthday. Look what you have done? You selfish boy, you have made your brave sister cry." She hugged her falsely distressed daughter lovingly. All the time Jamie was smirking at her brother while her mother wasn't looking. Harry looked at them blankly and stated in a flat voice. "It's my birthday too you know? You didn't even remember Jamie and I are twins. The least you could do is allowing me to go outside for some fresh air."

"How dare you speak to your mother like that?" James growled as he stormed up to Harry who was backing away in fear at the murderous expression on his father's face.

James slapped Harry hard across the face sending Harry tumbling to the floor. Harry looked up wide eyed at his father tears welling and an overwhelming hatred brewed from within. His father may have ignored him and pretended that Harry did not exist but he had never hit him before. As his tears started to fall freely down his face he bolted for the door.

Jamie grinned and continued with her birthday party. James and Lily smiled dotingly upon their daughter and handed her their presents. Harry ran as fast as he could away from the house he had come to despise as much as his family to the forest clearing he had discovered a while back. He collapsed against a tree trunk and proceeded to sob his eyes out. He could not believe his own father had hit him.

From that day he swore to never forgive his family. He would learn all he could and get away from his family as fast as he could. He would show them that he Harry would be successful. That he would pass on top. And so he studied.

5 years later.

Today was Harry's eleventh birthday. As always, he went to the kitchens to celebrate with the house elves. They would give him their

customary present, a slice of cake and wish him a happy birthday. He had followed a specific routine most of his life 'til now. He would wake and come down for his lessons with the elves then go back to his room to study from his parents' old school books. He would eat with the elves and listen to their talk never seeing his family much.

He walked quickly to the kitchens and saw the house elves already waiting for him. He smiled at them and took the offered cake slice with 11 candles in it. He ate the cake as they talked to him about many things and sometimes quizzed him on things they would teach him.

"Master Harry, we want to give you a present," Knobby said handing Harry a flat package wrapped in plain brown packaging paper.

Unable to contain his excitement at what appeared to be a real gift he opened it carefully. His eyes went the size of saucers as he gasped. Inside the paper was a beautifully expensive looking emerald green robe. It had silver trimming on the cuffs and collar and the lining was midnight black. The material felt like silk and had elaborate Oriental designs in a lighter shade of green painted on it. Harry carefully tried it on. The sleeves and the hem fell over Harry's hands and onto the floor. It would be some time before he would grow into it, but he loved it dearly all the same. He turned to the elves who all seemed to holding their breath with wide smiles on their faces. Harry smiled from ear to ear showing his deep appreciation. "It must have cost them a lot to get the material alone," he thought.

"I don't know how to thank you? This is... It's beautiful." Harry whispered. "How on Earth did you manage to pay for this?"

"Knobby is using most of house elves money we have been saving since Master was only 5 to pay for the material. Then we have been sewing it ourselves," Knobby beamed.

Harry grinned at them and hugged each of them thanking them from the heart for the beautiful robe. One of the younger house elves came scurrying up.

"Master Harry! We is having your Hogwarts letter!"

Harry took the letter smiling widely. This had been his best birthday yet. He quickly read through the letter. After thanking the house elves once again he bolted upstairs and put his robe in a safe place before going off to find his parents.

He found them at the breakfast table cooing over his chubby sister's acceptance letter. They paid no attention when he walked in and ate their breakfast pretending he was not there. Harry not even the slightest bit phased by this cleared his throat politely.

"What do you want?" His father snapped irritably.

"I got my Hogwarts letter I was hoping I would be able to go with you to get my supplies from Diagon Alley." Harry replied coldly.

"Fine, but only because we're taking your sister there also."

Two hours later found them in the crowded streets of Diagon Alley. Lily gave him a bag of galleons.

"Here boy, take this and get your things, come back to The Leaky Cauldron in 4 hours, do I make myself clear?" Lily whispered harshly.

Harry nodded and left. He went to get his books first. He paid for his books then proceeded to get his potions supplies, and other necessities. He then decided to get his robes and his wand. Harry entered Madam Malkin's confidently. The old witch smiled kindly at him and led him to stand where another boy was being fitted. Said boy had platinum blond hair that was slicked back and aristocratic features.

"Are you going into your first year for Hogwarts too? Father is getting my potions ingredients while mother is getting my books, I'm Draco Malfoy." The boy said extending his hand.

"Harry Potter." Harry said, his mask still on. He shook the offered hand after studying the boy.

"It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance Harry." Draco said genuinely. Something about the black haired boy intrigued the blond.

"No the pleasure is mine, Draco." Harry replied with a genuine smile on his face.

"All done dear." Madam Malkin said to Harry.

"See you at Hogwarts." Harry said to Draco before paying and leaving.

Harry walked quickly to Ollivander's wand shop. He entered the shop proceeding cautiously, due to its appearance, until he felt a strange presence behind him. Mr. Ollivander appeared out of nowhere and gazed at Harry with an odd expression.

"Mr. Potter. How are you today?"

"I am quite well thank you sir." Harry replied blankly.

"Ah yes, wonderful, which is your wand arm?"

Giving a look of indifference Harry answered him, "I'm ambidextrous actually, and does it matter?"

"Interesting."

A tape measure started to measure Harry in places he didn't feel required such measurements, but he stayed still and was patient nonetheless. Suddenly the tape fell to the ground and Mr. Ollivander handed him a wand. As soon as he touched it the wand was pulled out of his grasp.

"No, no." Mr. Ollivander said.

After trying dozens upon dozens Mr. Ollivander stopped. He pulled out a very dusty box.

"I wonder. Holly and phoenix feather 11 inches. Nice and supple."

Harry took the wand and felt a warm sensation flooding through him. Green and silver sparks shot out of the end of his wand.

"Oh Bravo, yes indeed, how very good. Well, well, how curious, how very curious indeed." Mr. Ollivander said.

"What's curious?"

"I remember every wand I've ever sold Mr. Potter and it just so happens that the phoenix who gave the feather in the core of your wand gave only one other. It's curious that you should own this wand when its brother gave your sister her scar. I believe we can expect great things from you Mr. Potter. After all, He-who-must-not-be-named, did great things. Terrible but great."

Harry raised an eyebrow and paid for his wand. He left the shop quickly. He felt glad for a moment that his parents had chosen not to come with him. This would have surely gotten him kicked out of the Potter family. Harry wanted to buy himself a familiar but did not have any more money left, so he sighed and headed back to The Leaky Cauldron. 20 minutes later his parents showed up with a glowing Jamie. She had a beautiful snowy white owl with her named Hedwig. She glared when she saw her brother. James and Lily announced their departure and forcefully pushed Harry into the floo and then flooed back to the Potter family home. As soon as Harry got home he returned to his room not attempting conversation. Not that there was an offer, there never was. The ebony-haired boy organized his things into his trunk before grabbing a book and reminiscing on the lovely day he had just had, and the boy he had met.

The days went by quickly until September the 1st. Lily and James paid no attention to Harry. They hugged and kissed their daughter goodbye pretending their son wasn't waiting for them to tell him how to get onto the platform. Finally they took Jamie onto the platform leaving Harry to follow. Harry like usual ignored them and hurried to find an empty compartment. He placed his trunk in the compartment and pulled out a book.

The ride was uneventful until 30 minutes later. The door opened. The blond boy that Harry had spoken to in Diagon Alley, the same who had occupied a significant amount of his thoughts since then, greeted him and entered.

"Hello. Do you mind if I sit here? I don't want to sit with the two goons that keep following me around."

"Sure." Harry said returning back to his book. The blond pulled out a book of his own and the rest of the ride was spent in companionable silence.

They dressed in their robes shortly before the train stopped. They made their way out of the train and heard a large man call for first years. The man, Hagrid, led them to past trees to a clearing. The first years gasped at the beautiful castle known as Hogwarts, they clambered into boats. Harry and Draco moved to the front of their boat which was also occupied by two more students, Blaise Zabini and Pansy Parkinson.

A strict looking witch led them to a chamber where she told them to wait, the students had started talking and wondering how they were going to be sorted when a boorish red head said quite loudly. "Some sort of test I think. Fred said it hurts a lot but I think he was joking."

Harry snorted. He could tell that the redheaded boy was going to be a Gryffindor.

"Do you have any idea where you'll be sorted Harry? I'm pretty sure I'm going to go to Slytherin. I hope to dear gods I'm not in Hufflepuff or Gryffindor." Draco said piteously.

Harry smirked at Draco. "I think you'll probably end up in Slytherin or Ravenclaw. You would creep out the Hufflepuffs and you don't seem brash or an attention seeker."

Draco smirked back. "I'd say the same for you."

The stern witch, known as Professor McGonagall, came back and told them to form a line. The students lined up and walked into the Great Hall looking around wondrously. Harry looked up at the ceiling. Draco looked up as well.

"That's cool." He whispered to Harry.

"It's enchanted to look like the sky outside. It's all in 'Hogwarts, A History.' I read about it when I was six Draco." Harry said.

A bushy brown haired girl looked at Harry in surprise. He regarded her coolly. She seemed like the nosy do-gooder type. She scrunched her eyebrows in confusion and ignored the boy. Harry made a mental note to avoid her at all costs; thinking anyone with that amount of hair should always be avoided. They stopped in front of a stool with a frayed hat on top of it. The brim of the hat tore open and it began to sing:

Oh you may not think me pretty,
But don't judge on what you see,
I'll eat myself if you can find
A smarter hat than me.
You can keep your bowlers black,
your top hats sleek and tall,
for I'm the Hogwarts Sorting Hat
and I can cap them all.
There's nothing hidden in your head
The Sorting Hat can't see,
so try me on and I will tell you
where you ought to be.

You might belong in Gryffindor
Where dwell the brave at heart,
Their daring, nerve and chivalry
Set Gryffindors apart;

Draco smirked and leaned over to whisper in Harry's ear. "You might belong in Gryffindor, where dwell the weak at heart, their love of fame and fortune, set Gryffindors apart." Harry bit back a snicker.

You might belong in Hufflepuff
Where they are just and loyal,
those patient Hufflepuff are true
and unafraid of work or toil;

Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw
if you've a ready mind,

*where those of wit and learning
will always find their kind;*

*Or perhaps it will be Slytherin
So strong they prove their metal
those cunning folks use any means
if scores they need to settle.*

*So put me on! Don't be afraid!
And don't get in a flap!
You're in safe hands (though I have none)
for I'm a Thinking Cap!*

Professor McGonagall opened up a scroll. "When I call your name you shall put on the hat and sit on the stool to be sorted." She said. "Abbott, Hannah."

A pink faced girl placed the hat on her head and sat down, a moment later.

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

And so the sorting went like this. Draco was sorted into Slytherin, Granger was sorted into Ravenclaw; it went on until Perks, Patil and Patil then finally.

"Potter, Harry."

Harry walked up to the stool. He placed the hat on his head. Much to his annoyance it fell past his eyes obscuring his view of the Great hall.

"Hmm, difficult, very difficult plenty of courage I see, not a bad mind either. There's talent oh my goodness yes - and a thirst to prove yourself, now that's interesting, you have a dark past Mr. Potter, yes, and you know the truth about that night don't you. Now why is it that you have told no one?"

Answering, the hat shielding his words from all on lookers, Harry spoke. "I have the upper hand. I got to see how my family really is. Besides I hate my sister. When Voldemort finally rises he's not going to come looking for the neglected Potter boy. No, he's going to go

after The-Girl-Who-Lived. And after he kills her and my parents, hence doing me some good; I can train and be ready to kill him or ally with him. I have a huge score to settle."

The Sorting Hat seemed to be on Harry's head a lot longer than other students'. Professor McGonagall moved to check its progress, just as the hat was summing up his choice for Harry.

"How very cunning and sly of you, quite ruthless too if I do say so. Your mind is one of the most complex ones I have ever seen. You have a lot of similarities with Tom Riddle, now he was a very fine specimen, such a shame he turned to the Dark Arts the way he did. Well Mr. Potter there's only one place you belong and that's..."

Just as Professor McGonagall was about to take the hat off Harry and check his progress, the hat shouted triumphantly.

"SLYTHERIN!" The Slytherin table clapped politely welcoming their newest snake.

Harry gracefully got up ignoring the shocked looks on everyone's faces and the glare on his sister's face. He walked calmly to the Slytherin table. Many older Slytherins nodded in acknowledgement and shock. Nobody had expected a Potter to go into any other house than Gryffindor. Harry inwardly cringed. No doubt his sister would be mailing his parents tonight with the news.

He sat down beside Draco who gave him a smile. Harry returned a small smile. The students quieted down and Professor McGonagall continued.

"Potter, Jamie."

Whispers broke out.

"Did she say Jamie?"

"*The* Jamie Potter?"

"The Girl Who Lived?"

The hat was placed on her head, in what seemed like a moment later it shouted.

"GRYFFINDOR!"

Harry smirked. "As if she'd be anywhere else."

Draco snickered.

Dumbledore said a few words and the feast appeared. The students ate merrily and chatted alongside their classmates. Harry and Draco talked for a while. Harry found himself liking the blond boy a lot. He had a lot of interesting views and indeed turned out to be nearly as studious as Harry. Dumbledore stood and told the students to stay away from the forbidden forest and the third floor corridor. He made the school sing the school song in which none of the Slytherins participated. The Weasley twins were the last singing. Dumbledore then sent them off to bed.

Harry and Draco followed the prefect to the Slytherin dorms. Because there was more space in the Slytherin dungeons students only had to share a room with one other person. Harry had been paired up with Draco much to both boys' delight. They undressed and said goodnight to one another, each then falling into a dreamless sleep.

Chapter 2

Disowned

Jamie Potter followed the other Gryffindors into the girls' dorm. They undressed, all except Jamie who stood there hands out-stretched calling for assistance from the 'help' when none came and she appeared to be getting a little too 'vocal' she was helped by the newly resorted Hermione Granger, originally put into Ravenclaw until she called the Sorting Hat and 'insufferable old tarpaulin' prompting it to re-sort her.

"Must have been all that hair dear?" was its only apology.

When all the girls had redressed into their nightgowns, they set about finding comfortable chairs. Taking out their quills, ink and parchment and they started writing their first letters back to their parents and families telling them about their experience with the Sorting Hat.

The excitement and uncertainty of the wait was always the most lasting impression a first year student at Hogwarts had.

Will I? Wont I?

Nearly always a student was put into a house that they expected, well nearly.

Jamie was the new Princess of Hogwarts and the darling of Gryffindor, what could possibly spoil that wonderful feeling? Her brother, that's who,

Harry was placed into Slytherin along with his new friend Draco Malfoy, in the wizarding world everyone who went bad was a Slytherin at heart, it was known. Slytherins were ruthless and cunning and only interested in themselves,

Sounds like the Sorting Hat may have gone senile this observer thinks.

What better way to solidify her milky white public image Jamie thought than to have the indignity of a brother who was bad. Forcing The Girl Who Lived to chose truth and justice over family, oh it was too delicious. Playing the scene in her mind

‘Oh my, Girl Who Lived, you have an evil brother, how brave you are! How will you cope? Don’t cry, we will stand with you against the darkness as long as you honour us with your benevolence’

Sniggering to herself, Jamie grinned at the thought of how angry her parents would be to know Harry was in Slytherin. And she couldn’t wait to get him into as much trouble as she could. There was a place for one Potter hero and celebrity, and she was it. She knew that her parents would expect her as the papers had quoted,

‘The saviour of all that was good and pure’,

‘The Girl Who Lived’,

‘Winner of “Pediwitch Monthly’s” Most Charming Smile award’ every month since she was one.

‘Magical world’s largest fan club holder’

‘Poly-juice’s, “Face like an angel” range’

‘Honorary Official Ambassador for Street Wizards Anonymous’

Etc. etc. etc. the list of titles and awards extolled on little miss perfect since that day were amazing, so understandably her parents would expect their little cherub to be in the most popular house, and this year as it had been for so many years now, Gryffindor. Yes they would be absolutely swelling with pride when they heard that she would be a Gryffindor, that feeling filled Jamie.

“I’m in Gryffindor” she thought smugly.

She sat down and quickly composed a letter for her parents sending it off with her snowy owl Hedwig.

Lily and James Potter waited eagerly for their daughter's letter. They knew she would end up in Gryffindor. She was, after all, The Girl Who Lived, brave, courageous and loyal. She who would light up the room when she walked in, literally, she would, they had the lighting charmed so that where ever she walked the lights seemed to follow her. They inquired about acquiring the same treatment for their little celebrity whilst she was at Hogwarts, they were supplied with the address of Durmstrang by return owl, and they got the message.

Hedwig soared in through the window and perched on the table. Lily practically jogged to relieve Hedwig of her letter. She beckoned James over and started to read the letter, James reading over her shoulder.

Dear Mama and Papa,

I have had twelve marriage proposals since the first day, but they are mostly from failed wizarding families trying to associate with my status.

Everybody loves me of course. I was however surprised that I only have one room and no house elf of my own. Papa, I had to open a chest with a mirror on it today, all the other girls seemed to get their clothes from it, I think they called it a closet. What a silly name. I was quite cross I must say when I stood with my arms out waiting for my dresser and no one came, apart from Granger who had complained so much that she was re-sorted and placed into Gryffindor, she came over and attended me. I think I will employ her, she is muggle born, but at least she seems to realise how much better I am than anybody else, and you did say I had to show my caring side after all Mama.

My mattress was very hard, I politely said that under no circumstances could I be expected as a perfect peach, and the saviour of the wizarding world, to sleep on anything that wasn't as soft as a Tasmanian golden duck down bed, and of course I was ignored by the ignorant elves. I am sure one of them is the same old vulgar thing that used to talk with that boy you said was my brother.

I was however only upset for three minutes as the other girls in my wing gave me their own pillows, it will probably be the best sleep they ever have, knowing that they were close to me. I think they must have

stayed awake talking excitedly about helping me all night as they looked quite unkempt the next day. I, of course, looked beautiful and my new friend, Hermione dressed me and made my hair look very pretty. She told a ginger-haired, ill bred wizard called Ronald that he should of course carry my books and make sure I only had 10 autographs a day to do.

I have of course instructed my new friends Ron and Hermione that I can only sign twenty autographs a week, and that I can only possibly take school photos if I let the other students in the pictures, I don't think it would be appropriate for a skinny blonde Hufflepuff, or athletic tanned Ravenclaw to be able to be in my gracious poses, can you please see to this Papa, I nearly had to pose with that greasy-haired man Snape, I asked him if he knew who I was, I cant quite recall the next four hours, I think I must have napped, my hair will be back to normal in thirty minutes Granger says.

They realise how difficult it must be to be me and make sure all the lower class wizarding families turn to face the wall when I enter a room, which I like. I had to excuse Granger as she is a muggle born and Professor Quirrell from this as his voice isn't very loud, but felt as a Professor he could at least be exempt, really strange that the back of his head seems to try and get my attention.

I don't really feel it is my place to gossip or be anything other than the gracious hero you raised but feel that I must be the one to tell you this bad news.

*Please steady your selves Mama and Papa, it is with great **anger** and **shame** for our **family name** that I must inform you.*

Although I find it difficult to write this down, know how brave I have to be at times, so I will be blunt. That boy who lived with the elves in our wonderful and happy home, yes my brother Harry; he has been sorted into the house Slytherin.

Daddy please can you deal with this matter immediately once the shock has worn off, the ramifications of a Slytherin tainting the saintly name 'Potter' can only bring bad press to me, as I was destined to be loved by all, you said so yourself Mummy.

I will go now and hope you find a suitable solution to the sibling issue.

Until next time, your loving daughter,

Jamie

James gaped and Lily paled. Quick as lightning James' joy at their daughter's success and the shock from hearing his son had become a Slytherin turned into furious rage. His son was a disappointment and would never amount to anything. He had truly turned evil if it meant associating let alone becoming a filthy snake. Lily who had just sprayed a little of her favourite perfume 'Delusional' on herself, joined her husband in shock as questions flowed through her mind to join the tears that were welling, just as she had practised, in her eyes.

"Since when has?" She looked at her husband for confirmation of the boy's name

"Oh yes Harry, when did Harry become evil? We gave him the very best..." those words hung as she couldn't find the end of the sentence, feeling agitated at this she tried another

"We raised him proper..." Still not finding that illusive true statement, then she had it

"We gave him shelter. Yes we gave him shelter, and look how he repays our charity, and we even allowed him to go to BLOODY SCHOOL FOR MERLIN'S SAKE!"

James put his arm on Lily's shoulder encouraging her arms to stop flapping and to try and ease her rage; it worked briefly and then she started to sob tears of over dramatic proportions, prompting her husband to agree to anything she had in mind,

"Jamesie Wamesee, couldn't we just have him disappear? You know those lovely Nott boys would take him off away somewhere. No? Oh ok then. But we must remove him from the school and we cannot have a Slytherin ruining the celebrity whiteness that is our little angel, so I suggest you DO SOMETHING!" the last two words screamed in such a voice James thought his wife looked like she had momentarily turned into a warped painting.

“Very well dear I will attend to it immediately.”

James thought hard for a moment. A light shone in his eyes. He knew exactly what to do to get rid of the traitor he once called son. James told Lily of his plans. She seemed a little reluctant with leaving Harry in school at first but they had already paid his schooling and it wouldn't be very gracious for celebrities to ask for a refund now would it? But agreed to the rest and sat comfortably at her writing desk as she waited for her husband to return with the special red parchment.

Harry woke fairly early the next morning. He saw it was only 6 a.m. which left an hour 'til breakfast. He got up and prepared for the day. He went to Draco's bedside and shook the boy awake. The blonde grumbled something unintelligent and buried himself further into the blankets. Harry grinned and took out his wand.

"3 seconds Draco or else." He warned.

Draco ignored Harry and continued to sleep on. Harry humphed and waved his wand intricately. Ice cold water poured down onto Draco's head. Draco yelped and jumped out of bed. He glared at Harry who was smirking.

"What the fuck?" The blonde glared.

"I warned you. Now you know what to expect by not listening to me."

Draco, hair dripping water onto his bed, glared at Harry but went to prepare himself for the day, Draco mentally noted not to anger Harry and to listen to his warnings in future, but being a true Malfoy would bide his time, he liked Harry but no-one wet a Malfoy.

Shaking his head of the excess water he quietly smirked as he heard similar yelps and protests from the other boys who seemed to receive the same treatment as Harry had gone to the other rooms to wake up the sleeping boys, he didn't want anyone to lose points for their house for being late on the first day, it was an exercise he would repeat time and time again over the years.

After the first year boys had dressed and gathered their books they made their way to the great hall. Harry had started talking to Blaise

Zabini and Theodore Nott; they were far more interesting than Harry had originally given them credit for, and was happy that he had spent some time talking with them about what classes would interest those most.

Draco rolled his eyes but joined in the chat. Harry looked up at the head table and met with obsidian eyes. The darkness of the gaze seemed to offer an all but brief 'hello' they were the transfixing stare of the Potions master Professor Severus Snape. Harry looked to Snape's left and saw a turban. A sharp pain went through his head. He winced slightly. Snape saw and looked suspiciously at Quirrell who had not noticed the reaction. Harry turned back in on his friends' conversation, filing away the pain in the scar for later reference. Soon their chat turned to flying lessons, onto brooms, and onto Quidditch when hundreds of owls swooped into the Great Hall.

Harry looked at the owls with interest. He knew from the books he had read this was the way the students received their mail. He was awe struck. Hundreds of owls flying in non-conformed formation, not touching another in flight, it showed how truly spectacular these birds were.

Harry knew no one would even think to send him mail, Knobby the house elf maybe, but he had seen him yesterday as he was now working at the castle, a gift from the Potters apparently, so there was nobody left who would want to send Harry a mail, realising this he turned to Theodore to discuss their class schedules when he saw his father's owl, Prophet, soaring towards him with a bright red letter in its claws, from the books and descriptions he had read, he knew what this was--it was a Howler.

A Howler was a way a witch or wizard could convey stronger emotions than a letter would normally allow. Harry realised immediately who it was from, and didn't think it needed a genius to figure out why. Harry paled dramatically. His friends saw his drastic change. They looked up at the cause of their friend's discomfort and like every other time when a Howler turned up in the morning post the Great Hall fell silent. They gave Harry sympathetic looks, Draco holding his hand under the table in a welcome show of camaraderie. The owl dropped the Howler in front of Harry who tentatively picked it

up. He swallowed; his mouth all of a sudden seemed dry as he opened it.

"HARRY JAMES POTTER!" yelled out the furious voice of Lily Potter. Everyone in the hall turned to stare. Harry saw his sister grinning smugly.

"HOW DARE YOU! WE HAVE NEVER BEEN SO ASHAMED OF YOU! ASSOCIATING MUCH LESS ACTUALLY BEING A SLYTHERIN! WHAT ABOUT YOUR POOR SISTER! HAVE YOU REALLY NO LOVE FOR HER AFTER WHAT SHE'S DONE! NO DARK WIZARD IS TO EVER STEP FOOT IN THIS HOUSE DO YOU HEAR ME! I FEEL I HAVE MADE A MISTAKE IN GIVING BIRTH TO SUCH AN UNGRATEFUL BOY AS YOU, AND REGRET UNRESERVEDLY THE FACT THAT I AM YOUR MOTHER!"

Harry's eyes grew wide at his mother's cold, harsh words. The Howler unfortunately did not end there. Ice seemed to creep through his veins as he heard his father's voice. Draco's soft hand squeezed Harry's harder, it was the most comfort anyone had **ever** given him, Harry returned the squeeze as the Howler carried on.

"I AM DISGUSTED BY YOUR BEHAVIOUR! THIS JUST SEALS YOUR FATE.

YOUR MOTHER AND I WILL NOT HAVE YOU DARKEN OUR DOORSTEP AGAIN.

YOU ARE HENCEFORTH STRIPPED OF THE NAME POTTER, ALL TITLES DEEDS AND POSSESSION YOU FORFIET

YOU ARE FORBIDDEN TO APPROACH OR TALK TO THE SAINTLY JAMIE POTTER! hi pumpkin, my you look pretty today" James chirped to his daughter looking like the cat that definitely got the cream, then returned to his rant,

"CONSIDER YOURSELF DISOWNED!

WE WILL DENY YOU EVER BEING ONE OF THE POTTER LINE. THE PAPERS HAVE BEEN FILED AND AS OF THE 6th of

SEPTEMBER YOU WILL OFFICIALLY BE KNOWN ONLY AS HARRY.

AND...WE...NEVER...WANT...TO...SEE...YOU...AGAIN

P.S. - Jamie, your Mummy is happy you are being nice to the Muggleborns."

And with that the Howler crumpled itself and burst into flames.

Harry's body shook with slight tremors at the message. He may have hated his family before but now he loathed them. How dare they publicly humiliate him? He actually did care that he was disowned. The last bit of kindness to their son was allowing him to keep his name. But now he had no name he was just Harry. It was a shock to say the least.

The Slytherins looked at Harry sympathetically. Draco, Blaise and Theodore looked angry. Harry saw many of the other houses were glaring at him. He looked shakily up at the head table. Most teachers were looking at him with kind, sad eyes. Professor McGonagall looked angry as well. But the anger was not directed at Harry. Professor Dumbledore looked grave. Professor Quirrell looked scared and shaky. One expression although completely took Harry by surprise was Professor Snape's. He was looking at Harry with a hint of sadness and compassion. Harry was shocked that this teacher who had given Harry a death glare the previous day was now looking at him with curiosity and compassion.

Harry sighed and stood up. His body was still shaking slightly. He excused himself softly and left the Great Hall. After endless wandering Harry ended up in front of the lake. He sat down leaning heavily against a tree trunk. Scrambled thoughts attacked Harry's frozen mind. He wondered what he would do now. He was nobody. Harry stopped. He mentally attacked himself. What the hell was wrong with him? This was his chance. His chance to prove to the world he was no Potter that he was Harry and he would be great.

Harry wiped away the tears, which had starting to fall freely down his face at one point and stood up firmly. Class had started 5 minutes ago and he had Potions first, he was late, after summoning the same

cloud he cursed everyone else with this morning and then thinking again, he groaned, just perfect.

His previous family had already managed to get him into trouble without even being there. He sprinted to the Potions classroom and walked in steadily. After all, he still was a Slytherin and he had certain appearances to keep up. Snape looked at Harry indifferently. He nodded to a seat next to Draco, which Harry took gratefully Draco patting Harry on the back in an 'Are you all right mate?' kind of way, Harry nodded that he was.

The seats seemed to be divided into two sections. On one side were the Gryffindors on the other there were Slytherins. Snape briskly told them to brew a simple cure for boils, the ingredients were laid out on the desk in front of them, an infant could have completed the spell if it could read.

Labels on each item with the exact time to put it into the cauldron made Professor Snape believe this potion was idiot-proof, well nearly.

Snape sat at his desk to mark the third year essays whilst the class proceeded with the potion. Harry sighed softly and began to help Draco make the potion. He worked intricately dicing and stirring precisely. Snape stood up and walked around the class criticizing every Gryffindor except Granger who he just ignored.

He made no comments to most Slytherins. When he reached Harry's and Draco's potion he gave a brief smile to both.

"Excellent. The quality is perfect and the potion as been brewed precisely. Mr. Malfoy I have seen you show potential in Potions from an early age. However Mr. --" Snape stopped.

"Just call me Harry."

Snape nodded

"As I was saying, I have not seen Harry make many potions so I do not know the extent of his skill. First semester I shall see about both of you. If I declare you have enough skill I will move you to my advanced first year class."

Harry and Draco smirked. They bottled their potion so Madam Pomfrey could use it.

To their right Jamie yelped as her cauldron exploded covering her in boils. Harry raised an eyebrow amused while Draco sniggered. Their fellow Slytherins smirked or sniggered at the famous girl who lived to fail a simple potion.

Snape looked positively murderous. "Miss Potter, you foolish girl, I suppose you added the porcupine quills before you took your cauldron off the fire?" He glared at Ron,

"Take her to the hospital wing."

Ron nodded feebly and helped Jamie out of class. Harry pinched Draco in an attempt not to laugh uncontrollably at the puss speckled superstar in their midst, Jamie was bawling her eyes out, shrieking how painful the boils were and how her agent would hear of this. Snape sneered in disgust,

"Strikes me you had a narrow escape Harry" and gave what could only be described as a micro wink.

Turning sharply he rounded on Granger who paled drastically.

"Granger you didn't you notify Miss Potter of her mistake? You could have taken the cauldron off the fire first? Did you think you could make yourself look smarter if she screwed up? 5 points from Gryffindor."

The Slytherins smirked nastily at the glowering Gryffindors. They cleared up their cauldrons and left the Potions classroom, the Slytherins in good spirits while the Gryffindors glowered at everything complaining how it wasn't fair because Jamie was The Girl Who Lived and she didn't want to show off so being self-sacrificing she blew up her cauldron. Several Slytherins and Ravenclaws snorted. Many Ravenclaws had taken the Slytherins' side when it came to Jamie Potter's intelligence. There seemed to be nothing to debate about.

The Slytherins filed out of the class and made their way to the common rooms for their free period. Blaise and Theodore had to unfortunately go to a detention with Filch for getting caught outside after curfew. Draco and Harry made their way to their room. Harry sat down on his bed, he was quite distracted and Draco sensing this approached him offering more of the comfort he had shown earlier this day. His face held no emotion and Draco was starting to get worried. He sat down next to Harry and wrapped his arm around the raven-haired boy's shoulder.

"Are you alright Harry?" Draco asked softly.

Harry looked into his gray eyes, tears had started to well up in the green gaze. Draco wrapped his arms around the smaller boy's waist pulling him in close so that Harry's head comfortably rested on Draco's shoulder, and that was all it took for the emotions welling in the pit of Harry's stomach to rise to the surface and held by his new friend he sobbed holding on Draco tightly. He was so relieved at this moment that he wasn't on his own.

"It'll be alright Harry, I'll look after you" Draco whispered softly rubbing circles on Harry's back. Harry nodded as he continued to weep silently.

For the rest of the day Harry, despite Draco's concern, went to his classes and performed spectacularly. He was not about to let his previous family interrupt his schoolwork; after all he still wanted to be a success when he left Hogwarts. He wanted power and he wanted revenge. Harry was driven by the need to prove himself. To show the world that he was somebody. He wanted to make them respect him, to make them feel foolish for what they did to him. He would have his revenge on his family and Voldemort was going to help him.

He entered the Transfiguration class with Draco, Blaise and Theodore talking lightly about inconsequential things like the weather and the upcoming flying lesson. They sat in the back in pairs, Blaise and Theodore in front, Harry and Draco behind them. They took out their writing materials and waited for the class to start. Harry eyed the tabby cat on the desk suspiciously. A light clicked in his head, then he

winked at the cat, which in turn looked slightly haughty and affronted for a moment before returning a polite 'Meow'.

Ron Weasley and Jamie Potter rushed into the room after the bell rung and sauntered to their seats Jamie was looking better but was still slightly itchy and tried to disguise it.

Thinking that they had gotten away with there procrastination Jamie turned to Ron,

"Lucky McGonagall isn't here. I bet she'd chew our heads off." Jamie commented smugly.

The tabby cat leaped off the desk turning into Professor McGonagall. She glared sternly at the two first years who fidgeted under her gaze.

"Perhaps I should transfigure one of you into a clock. That way maybe one of you will be on time." Her tone was disapproving.

"We got lost." Ron said meekly.

"Then perhaps a map. I trust you don't need one to find your seats?"

There was a murmur of 'no Professor' from the two Gryffindors as they scrambled into their seats. As it turned out Professor McGonagall began with a lecture similar to their Potions Master. She explained that they would work on theory before the spell. Then with a glare the professor told them to either take the subject seriously or get out. They spent the first half of the class taking complicated notes. Halfway through class each student was given a match. They were to transfigure it into a needle. By the end of the class Draco had made his match pointy. Harry on the other hand had gotten it on his 2nd try.

"Excellent Harry, 5 points to Slytherin."

Charms and Herbology had gone like that as well. By the end of the day Draco was telling him he was probably every teacher's favourite student. Harry just blushed and swatted the blond. They went back to the common room to finish their homework, they joked happily about the day's events throughout, not losing track of the importance of the work they were doing, it was now vitally important that Harry get top

grades across the board, his future hung on the outcome of his schooling now.

Harry had made the acquaintance of the Game keeper, Hagrid. The house elf Knobby had told Harry how he was a good and honest half-giant that would be a good friend to him. Harry agreed after meeting the half-giant, he made Harry laugh and everyone knows Harry deserved a laugh or two, so after finishing his homework he excused himself from Draco's company and made his way to Hagrid's hut just on the edge of the Forbidden Forest.

Harry knocked on Hagrid's door and waited. Loud barks and shouts could be heard from the inside of the hut as Hagrid peaked out of his door.

"Ello 'Arry, 'ang on. Back Fang." He looked at Harry apologetically, "Just let me get the dog under control, won't be a minart."

Opening the door fully, Rubeus Hagrid, Game keeper and friend to all, stood welcoming his little friend to enter. Harry walked in cautiously and was immediately pounced on by a hyper black boarhound. Harry grinned and petted the dog, although couldn't refrain from making a face when the dog slobbered all over his face.

"Ahhhh that's it, welcome 'Arry to shatoo 'Argrid" Hagrid turned sideways arm outstretched in a show of openness and friendship,

"Make yerself at 'ome, I'm gonna make us sum tea."

Hagrid bustled about with the kettle on the stove and placed, what could be described as anything but delicate, pastries onto a huge plate.

"Dey be called Rock cakes. Aye, I made um meself I did, dey are a little 'ard on a count of the pepps but dey are given with a gud art dey are"

Harry couldn't help but chuckle, Hagrid joined him although unaware of the joke.

A rock cake nearly broke Harry's tooth, so being diplomatic Harry shoved it in his cloak to not appear rude. They then started in about the reason they were here, how had Harry enjoyed his first week?

Hagrid asked him how his week went. Harry answered, making sure to draw as much attention as he could to what that stupid Potter girl was doing, and his friend Draco, Harry told him about his lessons and also briefly about the confrontation he had with Professor Quirrell and how his scar had burnt so severely when he shook hands with the Professor in his first Defense Against the Dark Arts class. Quirrell had screamed and acted most inappropriately all thought for a teacher as he screamed for Harry to get away from him, clutching his hand and running screaming out of the room, looking like he wanted to kill Harry. Hagrid was clearly taken aback, the revelation of his scar made him want to go and see Dumbledore for some reason, but as quick as the thought arrived, it disappeared, and returned his thoughts to telling Harry not to worry about it.

"But Hagrid he really seemed to hate me."

"Rubbish!" Hagrid said. "Why should he?"

How'd yer other lessons go?"

Harry couldn't help but think Hagrid changed the subject on purpose.

Harry looked around the room and saw a small cutting from the Daily Prophet on Hagrid's table. He picked it up and read:

GRINGOTTS BREAK-IN LATEST

Investigations continue into the break-in at Gringotts on 31 July, widely believed to be the work of dark wizards or witches unknown. Gringotts' goblins today insisted that nothing had been taken. The vault that was searched had in fact been emptied earlier the same day.

'But we're not telling you what was in there, so keep your noses out if you know what's good for you,' said a Gringotts spokesgoblin this afternoon.

"Hagrid, when I was in Gringotts with the Potters on that day, I saw you coming out of Vault number 713. Hagrid that was the vault that they are saying is the one that was robbed"

"Official 'ogwarts business 'Arry you don' wanta be worryin aboy dat, Nar, and I was in vault 731 yer, 731 dey all look the same 'Arry not your fault ye made a mistake, now come on finish yer tea, its getting dark, ill walk ye back te school"

One thing Harry knew was that he wasn't mistaken, before he had become friendly with the half giant, he **had** seen him come out of that vault, the only conclusion Harry could come up with now was, it must be important to be hiding it, and it must be somewhere safe in Hogwarts

Now all Harry had to figure out was...What was **IT**?

Chapter 3

The Midnight Duel

Harry had never believed he would hate a person more than he hated Jamie. That was before he met Ronald Weasley, the ginger-haired Gryffindor and co-cronie of Hermione Granger and the other half of the 'Jamie Potter is perfect' society.

Jamie was spoilt, self-opinionated, big headed and to be honest, a down right bitch.

She was also the ringleader of the Gryffindor first years, and everyone who wanted to be someone, wanted to be in her 'in crowd'. So much so that when Jamie spouted that Slytherins were evil, dark, Death Eaters in-waiting, everybody wanting to bask in the glory of 'The Girl Who Lived' believed her. This resulted in giving Slytherin an even fouler reputation than they had had before.

Hot-tempered, mean-spirited and brash were only a few of the words Harry would use to describe the carrot-topped boy he hated. He especially seemed to take pleasure in goading Draco, who had purposely avoided Weasley, not going looking for fights with him after Harry's insistence that they would get revenge when the time was right for all the idiotic things Weasley would do.

However that did not stop Weasley from trying to provoke them into fighting. He had insulted Draco's status many times and called him Death Eater spawn. That time Draco lost his temper and had cursed Weasley but ended up being caught by Professor McGonagall, and he landing himself with a detention.

Draco ranted about Weasley's foul temper many times. Harry quite happily pointed out that they only had Potions with the Gryffindorks at least. Draco grinned at the prospect of not seeing much of Weasley. Or at least until they spotted a notice in the Slytherin common room which made them all grimace with disgust

Harry calmed the irate blond down and told him they would get their revenge. Draco glowered but nodded reluctantly. He knew that Harry was far more cunning than he let on, and could not wait for Harry's stroke of evil brilliance to kick in.

It seemed flying lessons would be starting on Thursday and much to everyone's annoyance Slytherin would be participating with Gryffindor. Harry felt like bashing his head against the wall when he found out. Not that he said this aloud or did it. It would be very unfitting of a Slytherin.

"Typical," Harry said darkly. "Just what I always wanted to do, make a fool of myself in front of a Weasley." He had been looking forward to flying more than anything else.

"You don't know that you'll make a fool of yourself, you have the experience of when you flew that one time. You seemed to have flown quite well then, what's stopping you from doing the same again?" Draco said reasonably. "Besides I can give you tips. I've flown before and quite well if I might add."

With quite a snooty air to his tone Harry thought.

Harry smirked. "Really? Well Draco is your flying status according to someone who actually knows or just you?"

Draco narrowed his eyes and punched Harry's arm.

"I'll have you know that I've flown many times. One time I was flying and this helicoptery..."

Harry smirked thinking, "Poor Draco, wonder how he realised it was a helicopter when he doesn't even know the proper name."

"...near crashed into me. But of course I with my excellent flying skills dodged it," Harry's insinuation that he was bragging ruffled his feathers.

Harry tried his best not to laugh as he said his next words. "If your flying was so great then why did the helicopter nearly crash into you? Are you sure you didn't nearly crash into it?"

Draco glowered and stalked off leaving Harry to repress his laughter. As soon as Draco stormed out of their dorm Harry's raucous laughter could be heard from the common room making the Slytherins raise their eyebrows in amusement. Harry hardly laughed these days and was a force to be reckoned with if they dared to disturb his silence and solitude. The only people who could get close to Harry these days were Draco, Blaise and Theo.

Blaise and Theo after hearing Harry laugh rushed up to the dorm to see Harry calming down. They smirked.

"What was so funny that could make you laugh like that?" Blaise asked innocently no doubt looking for blackmail on Draco who had stormed out of the common room looking embarrassed.

Harry smirked evilly. "That's for me to know and you to grovel for. Blackmail comes at a price."

Theo snickered at Blaise's failed attempt. They left the common room for breakfast. As they entered the hall they could hear Weasley complaining about first years not being allowed brooms and how he was so great on a broom. He talked a lot about Quidditch to the other members of his house who were nodding fervently. Jamie had also taken to boasting that she was a great seeker and would probably make the team in first year. Hermione being the lap dog she was massaged her shoulders as she talked about a life-threatening dive she had once pulled to save her mother's necklace.

Harry having heard this snorted.

"Bullshit."

All around giggled, Jamie ignored her estranged brother.

He knew in fact that Jamie was terrible at flying and Harry had in fact saved his mother's necklace after Jamie had a temper tantrum and threw it from the balcony into the lake. Harry who had been reading at the time saw his father chuck his old Cleansweep 60 in the trash bin. Harry never having flown before had snuck out with it. He had thought about flying on it but before he could, he saw his sister running to the top floor balcony so he had grabbed his father's old

broom and pulled what he would learn to be, a perfect 'Wronski feint' to catch it.

Of course at the time it was luck and he didn't even get the acknowledgement that he was flying. It had also been years ago when he was 8 years old. His father after seeing what Harry had done scolded him for stealing his mother's necklace and his broom. Harry had never been allowed to fly again.

Hermione Granger and Neville Longbottom, Harry noticed, were quite nervous about flying. Neville nearly had a nervous breakdown because he was sure that he would do something wrong and end up hurt. His grandmother being awfully protective never let him do anything dangerous, let alone fly. Hermione on the other hand, had obviously been reading through many books on flying as she seemed to be giving an endless amount of tips to everyone. Her shrill voice was cut short by the arrival of the owl post much to everyone's relief.

Draco's eagle owl swooped down. Draco had received his monthly sweet box from his mother. Harry listened in as Longbottom began to talk about his new remembrall. Harry looked at the small glass ball and saw turning the white smoke inside it turning a scarlet color. Harry raised an eyebrow at the pointless gift. No doubt that Longbottom wouldn't even remember what he had forgotten.

Harry looked wide-eyed as Ronald Weasley tripped as he got up only to smash into Neville whose wrist hit the table in an odd way. The students looked at the commotion and saw Longbottom sobbing cradling his broken wrist. Weasley looked sheepish and was overly apologizing when Professor McGonagall came and took Neville to the hospital wing.

At three-thirty the Slytherins made their way down to the Quidditch pitch excited about their flying lesson. They were unsurprisingly the first to get there. Harry and Draco chose two fairly good-looking brooms, which had minimal damage and stood next to them. A minute before the bell the Gryffindors scrambled across the pitch and stood next to their brooms which were looking as if they'd fall apart any second.

Their teacher, Madam Hooch arrived. Her hair was short and gray while her eyes were yellow and sharp like a hawk.

“Well what are you waiting for? Raise your hand over the broom and say ‘up’.”

“Up!” Harry and Draco said. Their brooms immediately shot into their hands.

Many of the other students however had problems. Much to their chagrin Jamie’s had shot into her hand as well. She grinned smugly.

Most brooms had not come up but some like Blaise’s were feebly moving toward his hand. Granger’s broom simply rolled on the ground and Weasley’s shot up to hit him smack dab in the face. Harry smirked and noticed Longbottom wasn’t there.

Madam Hooch showed them how to get on their brooms without sliding off the end. She then walked in front of the students fixing their grips. When she got to Jamie’s she claimed that if she was as experienced as she boasted, she had been doing it wrong for years.

“Now when I blow my whistle you kick off from the ground hard,” said Madam Hooch “keep your brooms steady, rise a few feet and then come straight back down by leaning forward slightly. On my whistle three – two – one.”

They rose a few feet. One of the Slytherin girls however was quite nervous and lost control. She shot into the sky like a bullet and fell off her broom at 50 feet. The class watched shocked as she plummeted to the ground. Harry grabbed his broom and shot off towards the girl grabbing her a few feet off the ground lowering her safely. Harry landed calmly and gracefully. The girl forgetting her composure hugged Harry tightly refusing to let go while Harry awkwardly patted her on her back.

Madam Hooch grinned fiercely. “50 points to Slytherin for saving a student from severe injury.”

Harry schooled his mask indifferently and walked back to his place next to Draco. The Slytherins smirked at him for saving one of their

own and gaining so many points while at it. The Gryffindors were glowering at him though.

"Class dismissed. Harry would you come with me." She ordered.

Harry nodded and walked behind her. She led him to Professor Snape's office. Harry's curiosity spiked. What could she possibly want? Madam Hooch knocked at the Potions classroom. A frustrated Snape opened the door. His students watched with interest when they saw Harry Potter and Madam Hooch.

"Professor Snape I would like to borrow yourself and Flint if you please."

Snape glared before nodding to Flint who walked out of the classroom shutting the door behind him.

"Well? What is it?" Snape snapped.

"I found you a seeker." Hooch grinned.

Snape looked at Harry. "I should have known. Very well. Harry you are to meet Flint tonight at 5 sharp for tryouts to be the Slytherin seeker."

Harry nodded wide-eyed. He was being considered for a seeker. Snape dismissed them. Flint looked almost maniacal when he heard the word seeker. Madam Hooch grinned at Harry.

"Good work Harry. I reckon you'll be better than Charlie Weasley and he could have played for England." Harry again nodded numbly and made his way to the Great Hall for lunch.

As soon as he walked in Jamie, Weasley and Granger verbally assaulted him. She sneered pitifully at Harry.

"Having your last meal Harry?" She said. Being the idiotic ditz she was she wouldn't have noticed Madam Hooch was smiling. "Does it feel good to know you'll be shipped off to some orphanage?"

Harry raised a brow. "What are you talking about?" he asked feigning innocence.

"What? You're not being expelled!" She screeched.

"No." he answered calmly. By now Draco, Blaise and Theo had come to see what was up. Harry suddenly had a thought.

"You know it's pitiful that you walk around with your lapdogs. They seem to be the ones who do everything. I doubt you'd even survive a duel let alone Voldemort." Harry smirked viciously.

Draco was dumbfounded by what Harry was getting at. He was sure Blaise and Theo were too. But they kept up their sneers and smirks preparing to ask Harry once they reached the privacy of their common room.

"I can take you on anytime!" Jamie answered hotly. Her two lapdogs nodding fiercely making their heads look like bobble heads. "Tonight even if you want. I challenge you to a Wizard's duel. Wands only – no contact."

"Done. Midnight in the Trophy Room. Who's your second?" Jamie looked from Granger to Weasley.

"Hermione." She answered snottily. "Who's yours?"

"Draco of course." Harry raised an eyebrow before turning swiftly and walking out of the Great Hall. Draco, Blaise and Theo on his heels. When they got back to their dorm Blaise raised a questioning eyebrow.

Harry smirked smugly. "Our chance for revenge has come. The Gryffindorks will go to the Trophy Room blindly and will think nothing of us simply telling someone, lets say Filch, that they'll be in that certain Trophy Room at midnight tonight."

Theo burst out in laughter while Blaise looked awestruck. Draco just smirked knowingly. "I knew you were going to do something that was this cunning."

“Harry you really are the perfect Slytherin.” Blaise grinned. They laughed and headed down to warn Filch of the Gryffindors’ plan. Filch smiled nastily at them and nodded in acknowledgement that they had now a pact with the caretaker. Filch would not hound them and they would freely give up information on the Gryffindors.

As they were walking back, the staircase they were on decided to move. They held onto the railing tightly waiting for it to stop. It stopped with a lurch that sent the boys sprawling. Not wanting to remain on any moving staircases they ran up to the corridor it stopped at. Unfortunately there were no other staircases allowing them to go anywhere else. Theo spotted a door at the end of the corridor. He motioned to the other boys. Out of simple curiosity they walked up to the door. Draco pulled at the handle. It would not budge.

Taking out his wand Harry whispered. “Alohomora.”

They stepped in through the door and froze. In front of them was the biggest dog they had ever seen. Not only did it look ferocious but the fact it had three heads made the boys want to scream and run. Harry noticed the dog was sleeping he looked at the floor and saw a trap door. Harry tugged on Draco’s sleeve and pointed to the trap door. The snore quieted. The 4 boys screamed and ran as the three-headed dog tried to maul them. They shut the door and placed every locking charm they knew on it and headed back to their common room quickly.

Friday morning was gleeful to all the Slytherins. The hourglasses that contained their house points had shown that Gryffindor had lost 100 points for sneaking out after hours. Draco told Harry, Blaise and Theo that the rumor along the Gryffindor table was they tried to hide in the third floor corridor but the door was locked and Filch found them. Harry simply smirked when Jamie, Ron and Hermione glowered at him.

Harry suddenly remembered his try-out today for the Slytherin seeker position. He had yet to tell his friends because of his ingenious plan yesterday. So quietly he put a silencing charm around them, and motioned for their awareness.

"I forgot to tell you yesterday, but Hooch took me to Professor Snape's class. She pulled out Professor Snape and Flint. I'll give you three guesses on what happened." Harry said smirking widely.

Theo raised an eyebrow. "You've been given detention with the Quidditch team so the beaters can practice their aim on you?"

Harry pinched the bridge of his nose dramatically.

Blaise suddenly grinned. "You're going to have a tryout to be the new Slytherin seeker."

Harry nodded grinning as well. Draco put an arm around his shoulder and smirked. "Always knew you had it in you. So what time's the tryout?"

"5. I can't wait for classes to end. They're so boring anyways."

Theo snorted. "Says you, mighty bookworm who is advanced in everything up to 7th year. Not to mention you're trying to read almost every bloody book in the library."

Harry glared. "Knowledge is power. At least I don't recite facts and show off like that know-it-all bitch Granger."

Blaise nodded seriously. "Harry is right you know Theodore. Besides you're being hypocritical; you read a book every night before bed on some such advanced material as well. Well so does almost every Slytherin. That's why we end up with the high paying jobs and Gryffindors end up with the degrading jobs. You know most Aurors actually come from Ravenclaw. Gryffindors are the wizards who do the easy jobs, which they still have to work twice as hard for. The only reason they even get jobs is because some actually do their studying."

Theo hmpfed. "Fine. Let's just get to class we have 10 minutes."

Draco just shook his head dramatically. "I'm surrounded by incompetence." Harry swatted Draco on the back of the head mussing up some of the blond hair.

“Watch it!” Draco practically screeched smoothing up his hair. Blaise, Theo and Harry just shared amused looks at Draco’s vanity.

Classes went by rather slowly for Harry. Draco and he managed another perfect potion and enjoyed the scathing remarks Snape made to Jamie and Ron. The Potion Master flat-out ignored Hermione going as far as to call her a ‘know-it-all,’ at which the Slytherins, who could no longer hold in their mirth, snickered.

Harry dashed to the Slytherin common rooms and put his books away. He rushed out to the Quidditch pitch making it there with only 2 minutes to spare. Flint was waiting there already with the rest of the Quidditch team. He glowered at Harry.

“About time. All right, I want you to fly up and I will release 3 snitches. I want you to catch them all in less than 40 minutes. The beaters will be firing bludgers at you as well so you’d better be quick.”

Harry gulped silently. He mounted a Cleansweep 60 and started doing laps. Flint released the bludgers and the beaters came pelting after them. Harry ducked and dodged the bludgers as best as he could. He faintly heard Flint shout he was going to release the snitches. Harry saw a glint of gold towards the ground. He barreled dodging the bludgers and went into a steep dive 100 feet off the ground. His hand grasped the tiny ball as he pulled out of the dive 2 feet from the ground. Next he charged at the snitch near the goal posts. The final snitch was hovering near Flint’s head. Harry flattened himself on the broom and shot forward like a javelin snatching the snitch from beside Flint’s ear.

Flint looked at Harry darkly for launching at him but that quickly changed to glee as Harry showed him the three snitches he had caught in under 20 minutes. Harry grinned when he heard the next four words.

“You’re on the team.”

Draco, Blaise and Theodore found themselves restraining a very hyper and happy Harry. They were not complaining though as they had never seen Harry so happy since he had come to Hogwarts. It

was rare for Harry to show emotion but when he did it took some of the worry they held for their friend off their hearts.

Harry went to sleep quite late that night and dreamt of weird things. He dreamt he was wearing Quirrell's turban. It was telling him to join Voldermort, that he and Voldermort were quite alike. Then the turban fell off and Harry woke with a sharp pain in his head. He was sweating profusely. From then he decided to be cautious around Quirrell.

He had already suspected something was odd with him at the Welcoming Feast when the pain shot through his head. His second clue was the stuttering. Usually when people stutter they only stutter the first or second word not the entire sentence. It was also odd that Quirrell had screamed and his head felt like splitting in two when he touched him. Yes there were many things wrong with the picture. He didn't trust the DADA professor at all.

Harry yawned and got out of bed. He noticed that Draco was already dressed and waiting for him. He currently was lying down on his bed reading a book. Harry trudged into the bathroom. He re-entered the room 30 minutes later refreshed and dressed. Draco got up and they left for the Great Hall. As soon as Blaise and Theo had joined them the owl post came.

Harry who had not gotten a letter since the howler was surprised to find an unfamiliar owl flying towards him. The owl dropped the letter and Harry using his seeker like reflexes caught the letter before it flew into the milk jug. He opened the letter cautiously not knowing what to expect. The letter had been written in emerald green ink and loopy handwriting.

Harry,

Your former parents request you to come to my office immediately after breakfast so they may complete the ritual that will confirm your disowning. They request it done in private so unfortunately you must go alone. Not even your former sister will be there to witness it. Professor Snape will accompany you to my office. He shall wait outside until the ritual is complete. Since I have important business I cannot do so which is why the next person who I thought of was your

head of the house. If you wish you may have your friends wait for you as well.

I'm terribly sorry for this my dear boy but I cannot persuade Lily and James to abandon their idea. Good Luck Harry.

Sincerely,

Headmaster Dumbledore

Harry's hands shook. This was the day he was being disowned. He had completely forgotten that a week had even passed. Draco and Blaise noticed their friend's shaking hands.

"Harry?" Theo asked, finally noticing the shaking hands.

"It's the 6th." Was all he said.

Professor Snape walked up to Harry. Harry stood up shakily and walked behind his professor to the headmaster's office. As they reached the office Snape stopped and looked at Harry with concern.

"Harry. You are better off without them. I knew James when we were in school and he was the same -- arrogant and selfish. You are better than them. Don't let them see they've won. Be strong and do not show them defeat." Snape said. Although his voice was not soft he allowed a little compassion to leak in.

Harry looked at his professor and nodded. "Thank you professor. I hate them but it's still hard." With that Snape said the password 'blood pops'.

Harry walked briskly up the stairs. His face was impassive and cold. His eyes were like ice. He opened the office door to see a smug James and Lily Potter staring at him. Much to their disappointment Harry was not crying nor begging for them to not disown him. It frustrated them no end.

"Come here boy. We have set the spell up." Lily snapped.

James took out a knife and a goblet. He sliced a small cut on his finger and dropped in a few drops of blood. He quickly healed his finger and did the same to Lily. Harry stepped forward coldly while inside he was shaking. He did not trust what James would do with that knife.

“Stick out your hand boy!” James snarled. Harry stuck out a finger. James having none of that grabbed Harry’s bony wrists in a bruising hold and slashed Harry’s palm. Harry bit his tongue to not cry out. The blood poured into the goblet. James threw Harry’s hand down as if it were filth. Harry wrapped his freely bleeding hand in his robes and glared.

Lily took the goblet and poured it over an ancient looking parchment bearing the Potter family’s tree. They poured the blood from the goblet onto the parchment and spoke a few words. The blood seeped into the parchment. Harry looked down at the second to last name. Slowly the name Harry Potter began to disappear moving his sister’s name to show that the Potters only had one child.

Harry smirked at his former family, “Thank you Mr. Potter of ridding me from a filthy heritage.”

Lily gaped in shock. She slapped the boy hard her nails digging into his skin giving him a straight cut an inch long that would scar. That shock turned to rage as she turned to her husband who was shaking with anger.

“James! He insulted our family -- do something!” She whined.

James brought his fist back and before Harry could move punched the boy hard in the face. Harry cried out unprepared for such an attack. He fell to the ground on his knees where James kicked him hard in the ribs effectively snapping one. Harry’s cry of pain alerted Severus Snape who had been waiting for the boy. He ran up to the office and saw red. Harry was lying on the floor bleeding from his ribs and his hand while James Potter stood smugly with his wife over him.

Snape brandished his wand and cast stupefy on both the Potters. He bound them tightly and picked up Harry gently. He walked briskly to the hospital wing. Poppy came from her office to yell at the

interruption but stopped dead at what she saw. Poppy Pomfrey knew abuse when she saw it so she hurried off to get supplies for the poor boy bleeding heavily in her hospital wing.

Professor Snape stood to the side fuming. 'How dare they!' he yelled furiously in his mind. 'Not only did they disown him but they beat him! I will get my revenge on Potter for this. No one... abso-bloody-lutely no one messes with my Slytherins!' he raved. Poppy gave Harry a dreamless sleep potion before turning to Severus.

"What happened?" She whispered furiously. After all this was still a hospital wing.

"James and Lily Potter." He spat venomously.

Poppy eyes widened before narrowing dangerously. Snape knew that although his wrath was dangerous, he came nowhere near Poppy Pomfrey when she was enraged. He almost felt pity for the Potters. Almost being the keyword.

"Where are they?" She growled dangerously.

"I'll lead the way." Severus smirked nastily heading to the headmaster's office.

Severus and Poppy came in to find Headmaster Dumbledore staring at the stupefied Potters curiously. He turned when Severus and Poppy entered.

"Ah Severus my boy. Could you explain to me why you have stunned the Potters?" the Headmaster asked gravely.

"I was standing outside waiting for Harry when I heard him scream. I came up here to find him beaten with a broken rib, cut hand and a cut on his cheek, not to mention a hand shaped bruised forming on his cheek. Those pathetic fools did this to him Albus and I will not stand by while one of my Slytherins ends up in the infirmary because his former parents beat him. I demand to see some punishment!" Severus bit out.

Dumbledore paled as he looked at his protégé sadly. "Oh James. I thought you were better than this." Dumbledore turned to face Poppy. "Any reason why you are here Poppy?"

Poppy glared at the headmaster. "Revive them now." She said softly but dangerously.

Dumbledore nodded and revived the two Potter who stood up bewildered. When they caught sight of Snape they glared.

"Albus I demand you re-think your decision to have him teach. He clearly stunned us for no reason." James spat.

"James. Did you hit Harry?" Dumbledore asked gravely.

"Of course! He deserved it, calling the Potter name foul and all." James huffed.

"I must ask you to leave, but I'm afraid you have Severus and Poppy to deal with first. If Harry demands it this could be taken to the Wizangamot. Child abuse, of all things, is a very high crime. I'm quite disappointed in the both of you. How could you do that to a child?" Dumbledore said, his eyes no longer twinkling.

Severus stepped close to James' face. "You should be disgusted with yourself you filthy bastard, hitting a defenceless child after disowning him. How low can you get? And I shall make sure Harry takes this to the courts. I have yet to question him on all the other things that might have happened to him while he resided in your home. I will make sure you are disgraced for this Potter." He said dangerously before turning sharply. His cloak billowing after him as he briskly walked down the steps.

Poppy walked up to Lily and James. In a split second James and Lily stood shocked. They stared at the usually polite and kind albeit strict nurse. She had slapped them both. "I despise those who do this to children. He is only 11. The kinds of wounds you inflicted on him were dangerous and could have led to more severe things had it not been for luck. I am beyond disappointed in you and I intend to make sure you know it. My skills as a healer are no longer open to you. Only for the sake of being a child shall I treat your daughter if she so needs it.

I hope you have a terrible life filled with misery for what you've done." She gave them both death glares which made them pale before stalking out to go back to check on her patients.

James and Lily Potter were astounded. They had only beaten a little brat who would be no use to anyone. Why did people even care? They decided to claim themselves victims of the child's evilness. After all he probably blackmailed them with some dark curse to defend him or else he would do something terrible to them. They happily flooded back to Potter Manor thinking they were forever rid of the demon child.

Meanwhile Severus had gone to the Slytherin common rooms. He walked in quickly and asked to where Draco, Blaise and Theodore were. Terence Higgs pointed towards Harry and Draco's room. Snape nodded his thanks before walking into the room. The three boys were sitting on a bed looking worried. Hopeful eyes asked Snape where Harry was. Snape beckoned them to follow him.

He led them quickly to the infirmary. When the trio realized where he was taking them they hurried their pace. When they reached the infirmary they heard two voices talking softly. One was Madam Pomfrey and the other to their relief was Harry. Draco, Blaise and Theodore rushed to Harry's bed. Harry looked at them through sad half lidded eyes.

"What happened?" Theodore asked.

"Today was the 6th. Today was the day of my disowning. Except it didn't go so well." Harry said sadly. "I know they hated me but I never thought they would actually be capable of doing this."

Draco narrowed his eyes. "What did they do?" he whispered dangerously.

Harry tried to talk past the lump in his throat. He would not cry he told himself. He would be strong. Snape seeing this conflict answered the blond's question.

"James Potter slashed open his palm and broke his rib and nose. Lily Potter slapped his face and cut his cheek scarring him." Snape spat hotly fuming at the thought of the Potters.

Blaise was the first to voice his outrage. "They did what!" he bellowed. Blaise ranted in Italian ignoring the weird looks he was receiving.

Draco fumed silently with Snape. Mentally he was shaking with rage. Harry could see the fire in Draco's eyes and placed a hand on his arm to calm him.

Harry smiled sadly. "It's okay, I'm fine now."

Theodore finally spoke up. "No you aren't! You're in the hospital wing for god sake! You need to file a report against them Harry. I'm sure Professor Snape wouldn't mind being a witness."

"No!" Harry yelled. "They'll win then. They want to see me weak. I want to ignore this. I hate them so badly and I don't want them to be satisfied." He said sternly.

"Please." He added in a whisper.

Reluctantly Draco, Blaise, Theodore and Professor Snape nodded. Madam Pomfrey came bustling out of her office and shooed the boys out of the infirmary. Professor Snape looked at Harry once again. He sat down next to the child's bed.

"Harry." Said boy looked up at his Professor.

"If you need someone to talk to my door is always open." With that the Professor stood up to leave. He turned around and walked to the door when he heard a soft 'Thank you Professor'. Snape smiled slightly before walking off. Things were going to get interesting and he needed a healthy dose of scotch before he could even begin to think.

Chapter 4

Halloween

Harry, Draco, Blaise and Theodore were sitting in Harry and Draco's bedroom talking about the three-headed dog. They were all thinking along the same lines but Theo spoke first.

"What do you suppose they're doing keeping a thing like that locked up in a school?" he mused.

Blaise raised a brow in thought. "I don't know and I don't care. The last thing I want to do is go back to check."

Harry meanwhile pondered what it could be. He knew Hogwarts was a safe place from all the times he heard his former parents talking. He vaguely had an idea as to why the three headed dog was on the third floor corridor but being Harry, he kept it to himself letting the others drift from their previous conversation to one of Quidditch.

Harry noted that Draco did not say anything out loud about the trap door and for that he was thankful. Later he would talk to Draco about the door and confirm his suspicions. He would also go to Professor Snape's office to ask about it. After all if whatever was down there was what had nearly been stolen from Gringotts in the first place then he would have to keep an eye out in case anyone else was trying to steal it.

Harry and Draco were left alone as it was time for bed and it was only then that Draco confronted Harry.

"Why did you not tell them?" he asked curiously.

"I'm not sure if my suspicions are correct and I would like to think the less people who know about it the better. Students aren't even allowed in the third floor corridor and what if one of them makes a slip." Harry replied honestly.

Draco sat for a moment in thought. "Yeah, I guess you're right but I still do not feel right about not telling them they are our friends after all, but I guess such measures need to be taken. So what's this about your suspicions?"

"I think the dog is guarding something or other. I heard James always boasting about how safe it is at Hogwarts. That it is even safer than Gringotts because Dumbledore is here. He would tell Jamie of all security measures that would be taken for her to be kept safe here.

I'm betting that whatever was the object of the thieves' desire that day, when they attempted to steal the contents of the vault at Gringotts is here, in that room. I don't know what it is yet, but I intend to find out. I have a sneaking suspicion that whoever wanted it so badly that they would try and rob the safest place known to most wizards, and fail, will try again here. I plan on us both talking to Professor Snape about it."

Draco stared at Harry long and hard. "I shall owl my father as well; he may know something about this."

Harry narrowed his eyes at Draco. "Your father was Voldemort's right hand man, are you sure he can be trusted?"

Draco glared back. "Of course he can be trusted he may be a dark wizard, but that does not mean he enjoys serving Voldemort! He was, and is still, a spy of the light side. I'm sure he'll know something about this, he is in contact with the other Death Eaters after all."

Harry nodded slowly, "Alright ask if you must. I'm sorry but I can't be too careful."

Draco smiled half-heartedly. "Yeah, I know what you mean. Go to sleep now I'll talk to you in the morning."

Harry grinned despite himself and settled down. He fell into a deep sleep.

The next day was spent in a flurry of classes and homework. The students seemed eager to complete any and all work they had for a carefree Halloween filled with tricks and treats. However one boy was

not amongst these students in their task to empty their schedules for a free evening. Although he had studied and completed his homework he was not preparing to go to the traditional Halloween feast as everyone else. He listened to the older students comment about the excellent feast and decorations. They would never admit this outside the Slytherin common room but inside they were free to divulge such information.

Harry sat in an armchair near the fire watching the flames dance, their colours moving to an unheard melody. He did not plan to go to the feast tonight. He wished to spend his evening in solitude. It was on this day that his dear Grandmother died. His Nana had always been there for him until she died when he was 9 years old. The wound had healed but the scar would forever be there. Every Halloween he would take the day to mourn for her.

Nana had been the only one to care for him and when she died Harry was left alone. Harry had not been able to visit her very much because of his parents. James especially wanted his mother to dote on Jamie so he limited any and all visits that Harry had with her. When she died he hated her sometimes for it.

As much as Harry was independent he still craved the affection she had once been there to give. His parents and sister did not like Nana as much as him simply because she chose to shower Harry in affection rather than Jamie. It had hurt to see her being rejected so he left her side one day telling her with a note his reasons for running.

She found him far into the forest lying unconscious beside a river. Nana had taken him home and nursed him back to health before scolding him for his foolish actions. He still remembered her exact words to him.

:Flashback:

“My darling Grandson, sit and listen to me. My family means a lot to me and yes it hurts that my own son who loved me dearly would reject me simply for loving you. But it is not the hurt for me I feel it is for you. To have grown in such a family is a shame and I am humiliated. My once loving and caring son has turned into such a monster in my eyes. To toss aside his own flesh and blood, someone

he created out of love with his wife, like a rag doll from infancy pains me.”

Harry moved into her lap and rested his head against her shoulder as she rocked them both on her rocking chair.

“Hear my voice Harry, hear the love I feel for you. I shower you with the affection you truly deserve and my son will see it. It may take years but he will see what he has missed on. My dear darling Harry do not run away like you are a burden. I feel the pain in your heart and I want you to come past the ice surrounding your heart.

You have much love to give child, and as much as it pains me I accept your ways of indifference to your family. But past the ice you should make a door where your love can visit me. Never forget me darling grandson, as I shall never forget you. Remember there will be those who love you more than you could ever hope for. Do not close yourself to the world. Remember these words Harry.”

:End Flashback:

“I wish it were true Nana, how I wish it were true.” Harry whispered before reverting back to his blank mask. He simply sat there by the fire watching and thinking of the times with his Nana.

Blaise, Theodore and Draco watched worriedly. The foursome had become the best of friends and cared deeply for each other. Although they had not known each other long something had clicked with them from the very beginning. There was a curious and worried tension amongst them at the moment as they observed the ever-so-still raven-haired boy watching the fire reminiscing the past. They continued to watch until they saw a single tear roll down his pale cheek. That snapped them back to reality to find what was wrong with their friend. But first they would have to improve his spirits.

“Well today is Halloween.” Blaise spoke first.

“Perhaps he will enjoy the feast and the somber mood around him will dissipate,”

Theodore said softly his eyes lingering on the pale boy before reverting back to the blond and sable haired boys.

“Well then let’s get him to go to the feast. I asked earlier and he said he would not go but maybe with a little persuasion he will come.” Draco said idly while watching the green-eyed boy he had become protective of.

“Then it’s settled. Come, we shall let him bask in his morbid mood for a while and then put our plan into action,” Blaise said smirking.

Draco, Blaise and Theodore somehow managed to effectively put their plan into action and Harry ended up agreeing to go to the feast. On their way to the Great Hall Harry was still wondering how they had dragged him along into going to the Halloween feast. He sighed internally and filed it away for a rainy day.

The celebrations and feast went without any incident or problem that is until Harry started to feel a bit queasy. He excused himself and brushed off his friends telling them he would be alright. Harry walked briskly to the nearest washroom. He rushed to the first toilet and heaved all food he had consumed jerkily. He wiped his face with toilet paper thankful none of the vomit had gotten on his robes or hair. He sat panting slightly, leaning on the toilet. Regaining his composure, Harry flushed the toilet and washed his face in the sink. He was about to leave the washroom when a foul odour assaulted his nose. The door opened and in came a troll. He gasped and backed up against the wall of the bathroom.

Draco, Blaise and Theodore were at the feast enjoying themselves despite their slight worry for their friend. Theodore was about to launch into a verbal spar with Draco when the doors of the Great Hall burst open. Professor Quirrell rushed in his turban askew and his

robes rumbled. His face was distraught and horror stricken. Everyone was alerted as he shouted towards Dumbledore.

“Troll! Troll in the dungeons! I thought you should know.” He whimpered before falling into a dead faint.

The hall was filled with screams and chatter. Professor Dumbledore stood calmly.

“Silence” The students quieted. “Prefects you will lead the students back to their dormitories. Teachers shall come with me to the Dungeons.”

Draco, Blaise and Theodore looked at each other wide-eyed, each thinking a different thing. They voiced their thoughts simultaneously giving each other a new thing to think about as well.

“How did a troll get in the dungeons?” Blaise asked.

Theodore looked pensive. “What I’m wondering is why Quirrell was in the dungeons to start with.”

Draco paled drastically. “Harry doesn’t know about the troll.”

The three shared a look before rushing off to the boy’s washroom. They avoided the teachers and prefects rushing to aid their friend, hoping they weren’t too late.

Meanwhile in the washroom the troll had Harry backed up against a wall. Harry fought and he cursed ‘How stupid could he be just standing there waiting to be crushed?’ He whipped out his wand and pointed it at the troll. Harry thought hard about how to stop the troll efficiently. Then he remembered in one of the books he’d read that the only thing that could crack a troll’s skull or even knock the troll out was its own club. He pointed his wand at the club instead.

With a swish and flick motion he spoke the levitation spell,

“Wingardium Leviosa.”

The club pulled upwards and away from the grasp of the troll. Harry smiled maliciously before dropping the club onto its head. Unfortunately for Harry the troll fell and so did the club. A piece of heavy stone from the ceiling fell, Harry tried to dodge it but it struck his elbow breaking the bone. He bit his lip to stop his agonized scream and stared pale faced at the white of the bone sticking out of his arm. His head was starting to spin so he gladly sat down against the wall.

Harry, as much as it pained him to say, was very glad when Blaise, Draco, Theodore, Snape, McGonagall, Quirrell and Dumbledore showed up. McGonagall stared at the troll before glaring at Harry coldly.

“What is the meaning of this?” She asked as coldly as her glare.

“I wasn’t feeling too well at the feast so I came here to dispel my dinner. I was about to leave when the troll came in here. Unfortunately I had no choice but to do something otherwise I would be dead or somewhere in his mouth and stomach.” Harry said coldly his face blank.

Draco, Blaise and Theodore rushed forward. Harry raised his hand to stop them. They looked at him curiously.

“My arm got hurt in the process.” He whispered his voice laced with pain. The others suddenly realized the shape of his arm and paled ever so slightly at the white of the bone sticking out. “Hey guys can one of you help me up. I need to see Madam Pomfrey.”

Harry with the assistance of Draco stood up. He heavily leaned on Draco. His eyes suddenly spotted the gruesome mess that Professor Snape’s leg was in.

Dumbledore’s eyes twinkled slightly. “Professor Snape will accompany you boys as well to the hospital wing.”

Snape suddenly smirked. “10 points are awarded to Slytherin for knocking out a full-grown troll.”

Harry smiled grimly, shakily and with the help of Draco made his way to the hospital wing. To say Madam Pomfrey had been hectic was an understatement. She complained loudly about dangerous beasts after seeing the state of Harry's arm and Snape's leg. Harry was seated on a bed next to Professor Snape who looked annoyed.

"Professor, I had some questions to ask you and also I wanted to confirm something."

Professor Snape looked at Harry indifferently and put up silencing charms. "Speak."

"I've had this theory since I saw the Cerberus in the third floor corridor. I know that Hagrid had procured a parcel from Gringotts, which was probably something of great value. Gringotts had a break in the same day only after the parcel was taken so I'm assuming someone wants to steal it. Then Dumbledore announces that the third floor corridor is forbidden. I accidentally stumbled on the Cerberus and there was also a trap door there. So my basic theory is that Dumbledore has kept the Cerberus there to guard the trap door that leads to whatever it is he is hiding. Is my theory correct?"

Snape looked at Harry appraisingly, "Clearly I underestimated you. But yes your theory is correct. I suppose you want to know who is trying to steal it and what it may be?"

Harry looked sheepish. "That pretty much sums it up."

Snape raised an eyebrow. "I cannot tell you what the item is."

Harry frowned slightly. "It was worth a try. So what happened to your leg? It's quite obvious it was the Cerberus that mangled it up."

"It was the Cerberus that did this. This will answer your other question I suppose. I've had my suspicions that Quirrell is trying to steal it. But I do not think it is for himself. That would explain why my leg is, as you so eloquently put it, 'mangled up'. I had headed to the third floor corridor first to head Quirrell off before joining the teachers for the troll hunt."

"It makes sense. I felt uneasy around Quirrell more than once but I couldn't explain why. Thank you Professor."

"Not a problem Harry. I assumed had I not told you this you would have entertained my previous ideas of gallivanting into trouble and arousing suspicion. Perhaps you will leave the subject alone now but I guess that is too much to ask for," Snape said amusement lacing his voice.

Harry grinned. "Of course sir. I'm still going to go gallivanting into trouble. After all I found the Cerberus quite fascinating and plan to ask Hagrid about it. Also I have yet to figure out what Quirrell wants the item for and what the supposed item is. There are so many things that remain unsolved and there are plenty of clues to figure it out."

Snape raised an eyebrow. "Someone else who finds monsters fascinating, amazing. Hagrid will fall in love with you I suppose. Many people are usually deathly afraid of his 'pets'." He sneered at the last sentence.

Draco, Blaise and Theodore had come to visit Harry but failed in their attempt as Madam Pomfrey shooed them out the minute they arrived. An angry Madam Pomfrey was a force to be reckoned with and it took three first year boys only a minute to see that.

Luckily Harry was up and about the next day. It was a Saturday and students could be found lazing about taking advantage of the warm weather while it was still there. Harry however had plans to go to Hagrid's hut. He invited Draco, Blaise and Theodore to come as well. They were first reluctant to go, but Harry being good at manipulation had somehow got them to go along.

Harry knocked on Hagrid's hut and entered smiling. Hagrid himself was laying out tea and rock cakes. While Hagrid went out back to release Fang Harry warned the boys not to eat the rock cakes. Expertly Harry hid some in his pocket from time to time so as to not hurt Hagrid's feelings.

" 'Ello 'Arry what brings you 'ere today?" Hagrid asked taking his own seat in a large armchair.

"I wanted to ask about the Cerberus. Is he yours?" Harry asked listening intently for clues and also because he was interested.

" 'Ow do ya know 'bout Fluffy?" The teapot Hagrid held dropped to the floor with an almighty crash. Hagrid's beetle like eyes widened in shock.

"Fluffy?" Harry asked amused.

The other three however were not. Draco looked at Hagrid as if he were crazy while Theodore simply chose the fish look. Blaise however voiced his thoughts,

"That thing has a name?" He asked incredulous.

"Well o' course 'e 'as a name. Bought 'im off a Greek chappie I met in the pub las' year. Leant 'im meself to Dumbledore to guard the..." Hagrid stopped.

"Yes?" Draco asked eagerly.

"Nevermore' should'n 'ave told you that."

"But Hagrid what if someone is trying to steal it?" Theodore asked.

"Rubbish. Now listen to me, all four of yeah. Your meddling' in things that don' concern yeah. It's dangerous. You forget that dog, an' forget what it's guardin'. That's between Professor Dumbledore an' Nicolas Flamel."

Harry spared a warning glance to the others telling them to let it drop.

"So Hagrid tell me more about Fluffy? I've always wanted to see a Cerberus. They're quite extraordinary." Harry said intently. The tension flew out of the room. Hagrid looked as if someone had told him he could adopt a dragon. Harry and Hagrid talked more about the Cerberus known as Fluffy and some other creatures Hagrid had owned. Harry took an immediate liking to Hagrid's creature fascination as he too had an enormous fascination. While they were talking the other three boys had taken to playing exploding snap.

It was almost time to go when Harry felt a little sad. "The creatures you spoke of were quite interesting. I would have loved to see them it's too bad that you no longer have them."

Draco, Blaise and Theo stared at Harry like he had grown a second head. In their minds they were wondering if their friend was a bit on the mental side. Hagrid looked thoughtful for a moment before he broke out grinning.

"I've got jus' the idea 'Arry. I'll ask Professor Dumbledore special permission if I can take yeah into the fores' to see some of me friends."

Harry beamed. "Thank you Hagrid! That would be lovely. I especially want to meet Aragog. Acromantuala seem interesting. Perhaps we may even spot a unicorn!" Harry said his eyes twinkling much like Dumbledore's in anticipation. Hagrid clapped his protégé in the field of creatures on the back and ushered the boys out of his hut.

"Take care the lot of yeh!" He boomed before disappearing inside his hut.

Draco rounded on Harry. "Are you mad? Going into the forbidden forest out of simple curiosity?"

Harry answered back calmly. "Hagrid knows his way around the forest I'll be fine and I can't wait to actually see some of the creatures Hagrid has told me of. The forest is known to hold almost half of the different species I've read about. I can't wait!" he said before bounding off leaving the other 3 dumbstruck. Blaise broke the silence.

"At least he's happy." It took only a second before they burst into laughter running after Harry.

Chapter 5

Quidditch

After the troll incident there weren't many occurrences. The end of November fast approached for the four Slytherin boys. They could be seen in their common room sitting as close to the fire as allowed. The hierarchy system inside the snake pit was slightly complicated and as new as it may have been to the first years they knew well enough that if they did not wish to be hexed into the next week that they should well obey their elders.

Harry, Draco, Blaise and Theodore being quite curious as intelligent soon discovered the ways of the hierarchy. The eldest and more experienced students were at the top. The younger students out of safety did as they said. Each year Harry realized had two people or so 'ruling' it so as the years went on they could become ruthless leaders of the Slytherin house. Draco pointed it out that he himself and Harry were the appointed leaders of the Slytherin first years. Harry had stared at him in shock at that, earning a smirk for his obliviousness.

Blaise and Theodore had taken up the role of spying when the quartet first began to analyze the snake pit. From their spying they learned of blackmail material and its many uses to overrule their elders.

Harry proposed they learn efficient spells and potions of invisibility, silencing, concealment, and disguise. This was how the four ended up having some of the best seats in the common room. Harry had spotted Adrian Pucey cheating on his girlfriend. Now Harry is a good boy really, but the winters at Hogwarts, especially in the dungeons, can get cold. So simple persuasion on Harry's part is what helped the four boys out with their dilemma.

However when Draco and Blaise learned of how they were simply given the warmer seats they could not help but tease their friend relentlessly. As said before, Harry is a good boy to the eye and does not openly act Slytherin further than the emotionless mask and

intelligence. This is what caused his friends to look closer. It was there they saw his ruthless cunning and hidden agenda.

As much as they, tried neither Draco nor Blaise could alter Harry's decisions to exploit his plans. Theodore who had been watching his friend with a close eye wisely kept quiet. Two days later after their ongoing questions Harry's patience snapped. Without warning Draco and Blaise found themselves unceremoniously dumped into the icy waters of the lake, then dragged out. No one besides the quartet knew of how they landed in the lake. Let's just say Harry never had problems again.

Theodore looked up from the text he was studying on silencing spells and regarded the other occupants of the room carefully, most Slytherins had already gone up to their dormitories as it was quite late. Theodore kept watching the common room for any lingering students. As the last Slytherins went up to bed he turned sharply to stare at Harry, Draco and Blaise. Harry looked up jerkily having spent most of the evening hunched over a book.

"Theodore?" Harry questioned carefully placing a bookmark into his book.

"Perhaps you may have forgotten Harry, but it is bothering me quite a lot that you have yet to inform us of your theory." Formally spoken Harry noted, glancing warily at Theodore who had the full attention of the other two boys.

"I have come to a conclusion," Harry spoke carefully, "But there is still a crucial point missing in my theory, I will however share my theories so far with you." His voice calm although his eyes darted around looking for any eavesdroppers.

"So" Harry began to explain briefly his opinion of the three headed dog in the disused hallway and why he thought it was there

"What I have so far is, Fluffy is guarding something of great importance and Quirrell wants it for himself or someone else. Professor Snape thinks he is trying to steal it for someone other than himself. I don't know who though, neither do I know what the item is. That is what I want us to start studying next. After these spells are

learnt and done we shall be able to move more efficiently around the school. I am almost positive that I've read the name Nicolas Flamel before in passing, but I don't know anything about him, nor do I remember where." Harry sighed and leaned against Draco absentmindedly.

Blaise looked pensive for a moment. "I've seen that name before as well, but I can't remember where either."

Draco yawned, "Well this is getting us nowhere. I suggest we head off to bed for now as it is quite late. We can go to the library tomorrow."

Harry shot out of his comfortable position, landing on the floor ungracefully. Blaise and Theodore smirked stifling their laughter. They remembered quite well that Harry should not be irritated as he could do dangerous things when agitated. Blaise grimaced slightly remembering the icy waters of the lake. He shuddered from the sudden feeling of cold.

"Shite. I just remembered the day after tomorrow is the Quidditch match." Harry groaned slightly burying his face into the sofa. Nerves did not help Harry's situation. Despite his cunning, intelligence and wit nerves were something he had yet to dispel. There was a reason he was not in Gryffindor. No that was his perfect brat of a sister, Jamie. He thought venomously. Harry from a young age resented his parents for giving their daughter so much love yet he received none at all. It hurt when others had done it as well. Harry had gotten over it by now, but it still managed to hurt him at times he was only a child after all and he had never known love after his grandmother died.

Blaise broke his train of thought as he became more distraught, "You'll be alright. We've seen you fly mate, you're the best flyer in the castle I reckon. Charlie Weasley couldn't have pulled off some of the dives you have."

Draco raised an eyebrow at Blaise. "How do you know Charlie Weasley couldn't have done it?"

Blaise grinned dropping all signs of his mask. "I 'overheard' Madam Hooch telling Professor McGonagall."

Harry smirked. “Well at least our spying abilities have become better. I’ve perfected the spells except the invisibility one. It’s almost there but I can’t seem to cast it on living things. I tried it on a school owl but it only goes transparent.” His smirk turned into a frown.

Draco blinked owlshly. “You’re too damn smart for your own good.” He sniffed haughtily before briskly walking up to their dormitories.

Theodore snickered. Harry silently implored curiously why Draco was upset.

Theodore just grinned. “He’s upset because not only is that know-it-all bitch Granger beating him by 1 but you’re beating him by 7.”

Harry blushed. “I can’t help it. At least I don’t flaunt my intelligence.” Harry said defensively. “For years I had nothing to do **but** read.”

Blaise caught sight of the quick flash of sadness in Harry’s eyes. “At least it’s over now. You’re free of them.”

Harry nodded and smiled. “I’m going to go to bed now it’s already past eleven and I want to get an early start on Flamel tomorrow.”

Blaise, Theodore and Harry silently gathered their books before trotting off to bed. Harry’s eyes were heavy as he slipped into bed. He shut his hangings and placed many silencing charms.

His last coherent thought ‘*Merlin, I hope I don’t have any nightmares.*’

:Dream:

It was dark. There was no noise, the silence dragged on, dread filling the darkness. A sense of foreboding filled Harry. He squinted slightly as violent blue flames appeared. Inside what Harry guessed was a baby’s room stood — a woman? There was nothing strange, nothing particularly different about the woman until he noticed her swollen belly. Harry would have smiled slightly at the feeling of joy emanating from the woman had he not felt the foreboding darkness come alive with a presence. Harry shivered at the feeling of the presence; it almost did not feel human, except it was. The evil and corruption

radiating from it were enough to send the very brave into hiding. The woman's breath hitched.

It seemed she too felt deadly fear in the darkness. Harry watched in growing horror as a cloaked figure approached the woman. Harry's head seared in pain as the cloaked figure came to stand in front of the woman. He gasped slightly but otherwise ignored the pain. He turned his attention back onto the woman. She fell to her knees in fear. Harry could not do anything but watch as the figure raised his wand.

"Foolish muggle-lover, your husband thought that he too, like countless others, could protect his mudblood offspring. Hear this foolish girl I have murdered your husband, your father and your mother, now I shall send you and your child into the darkness forever. When I gave you the chance to join me you declined. This is the end for you; this is the fate that Dumbledore has brought on you."

The woman began to sob in despair. "Please have mercy." She pleaded. Harry gave the woman a look that clearly said 'Are you stupid?'

Voldemort laughed. Shivers went up Harry's spine as he heard the laughter of a madman. It was cold, high and ruthless. He raised his wand. "Crucio!"

Pain, like he had never felt before erupted throughout Harry's body. He along with the woman crumpled to the ground screaming in agony. Liquid fire seemed to run through his veins, burning him inside out. At last the pain stopped. Harry lay panting, his body twitching every now and then. Harry recognized the curse. 'The Cruciatus curse,' he thought wincing as he stood.

His attention turned back to the motionless woman. Voldemort sneered at the pathetic wench. He raised his wand once again smirking in delight. "Avada Kedavra!"

:End Dream:

Harry jolted out of bed, he ran clumsily to the bathroom. Harry made it to the toilet only in time to vomit. His body was sore and his

muscles were screaming at him to stop all movement. Harry knew with the upcoming Quidditch match he would have to confront someone. Thinking back on what he had witnessed he guessed it to be a memory, or perhaps a vision of something yet to come.

Harry panted slightly and leant against the wall slumping down in exhaustion. Green eyes glanced up at the opposite wall. The raven-haired boy cursed under his breath. It was 6 in the morning meaning he only had an hour before he had to get up anyways. Harry made his way back to the first year's dorm, his muscles protesting every agonizing step. Harry got dressed and ready as quickly as his muscles would permit. He silently thanked whatever deity listening that he had a free period first.

While all this was going on he had come to the decision that he would make himself some potions which could reverse the after-effects of the Cruciatus and keep hidden from anyone, for now, his new predicament. Harry grabbed '101 Basic Potions,' his cauldron and the required ingredients from his trunk and slipped out of the dormitory. He had borrowed a book from the library a few days ago that explained the brewing process of the basics he required. Thankfully it was exactly what he needed for the reversal potion for the Cruciatus.

At first when he read the method and ingredients he wondered why it would such a basic potion, but then realized that many Death Eaters had probably needed it after meetings with the Dark Lord. So it would only be common sense that it was frequently used and brewed. Harry made his way to one of the extra potions workrooms for students who wished to practice for exams.

He set up his workstation and carefully started to brew the potion. Harry made sure to brew extra in case more 'dreams' assaulted his sleep. He did not want to have to remake the potion nor did he want to have to go to classes in pain because he had no time to brew it. It took him an hour and a half to brew the potion by which time his room mates were up and ready. Harry quickly poured the potion into 5 vials. In 10 minutes he had cleaned up the area.

Before leaving the lab he shrunk the cauldron and ingredients to not arouse any suspicion. He hurried back to his dormitory thanking the

god's Snape had included the lab inside the Slytherin common room. Back in the dormitories Draco, Blaise and Theodore were waiting for him. Harry stopped dead in front of the irritated trio.

"Hello, lovely morning is it not?" Harry smiled sweetly, trying very hard not to grimace as pain jolted through him.

Draco shook his head. "We'll wait downstairs."

'He could tell I was hiding something' Harry thought surprised.

Harry nodded while walking to his trunk. He kneeled down gritting his teeth. Harry waited 2 minutes before uncorking one of the vials and downed the purple potion. He grimaced at the slightly fuzzy taste. Almost immediately cold flooded through his body healing his muscles. Harry sighed in relief and quickly shoved his cauldron, ingredients and potions into his trunk. Harry dashed downstairs to the impatient three boys waiting for him.

He was met by three suspicious stares.

"Good Morning." Harry replied tersely. He was in no mood to explain his actions.

Sensing their dorm mate's short fuse the other three let the matter drop for now. Draco glanced at Harry out of the corner of his eye more than once wondering what may have happened to him. He had woken late in the night to find Harry tossing and turning in his bed. His friend was screaming yet no sound emerged from the vicinity of the bed. Draco guessed Harry did not want anyone to notice. Grudgingly he did not wake the boy from his troubled sleep.

Making up his mind Draco settled into an uneasy sleep promising he would ask Harry in the morning, when he woke up though Harry had already gone. Judging from the expressions on his other two friends' faces they were curious as well. Draco was positive they were not awake during the night to see Harry's nightmare. Having sensed Harry's dark mood he decided that dropping the matter would be best for now. If he could help it, he would be going to class rather than the hospital wing.

Breakfast was a rather silent affair none of the boys could find a way to break the tension. Harry did not mind the oddly silent day. In fact he welcomed it greatly. His dream had left pressing concerns upon his mind and he had yet to organize his thoughts correctly. He would have to do so tonight. After all with tomorrow's Quidditch match he had to be on his guard. If his mind was buzzing and he did not catch the snitch...well let's just say he shuddered to think what Flint would do to him.

The attention of the students suddenly turned upwards where a large package was being delivered. It was held in the talons of 6 barn owls. Harry found his interest only slightly peaked. The package itself was quite thin and long. The students continued to watch its flight waiting to see who would receive the package. To everyone's surprise, including Harry's the owls dropped the package in front of him.

Jamie seeing this glared from the Gryffindor table. She had thought whatever the item may be, was for her. To find it was for her former brother caused welled up anger inside of her. 'How dare the stupid selfish twit receive something after embarrassing her family?' She would make sure his life was a living hell. Her mother and father would be so proud of her and she would triumph in the eyes of the wizarding world. Most of all she would get revenge on Harry.

Harry meanwhile sat shocked. He did not know anyone who would send him a package. He had no one left. Not even the house elves at Potter Manor were there for him anymore. He was an orphan. So why was this package addressed to him? Harry cautiously reached out for the letter that accompanied the package. His face was controlled and blank.

Of course inside Harry was nervous and excited but that did not mean he had to make a fool of himself. He was a Slytherin and he was not going to let emotions over take him. Carefully, so as to not give himself a paper cut, he opened the envelope and unfolded the letter. It was a good thing he had opened the letter first.

DO NOT OPEN AT THE TABLE!

This is your new broom. Slytherins must always look the best. And no Slytherin shall play on my house's Quidditch team without a proper

broom. I'll be damned if those Gryffindors win simply because you did not have a decent broom. Consider this a very late birthday gift.

Make Slytherin proud Harry don't let the broom go to waste or you shall be in detention so many times you'll wish you never heard my name.

Good Luck tomorrow I look forward to seeing Slytherin win.

Severus Snape

Harry felt some happiness fill inside him. Someone had gotten him a present besides the house elves of Potter Manor. It was late yes but it was still for him. As much as the present brought happiness within him it also brought dread. Many alarming thoughts filled his head, thoughts of failing his house and his head of house especially. What if he did not win? What would they do to him? Would he be kicked out of the house? Would they shun him, refuse to acknowledge him? Would his friends allow house loyalty to get between their friendship?

Harry sighed inaudibly. He lifted the package from the table ready to make his way back to the Slytherin common room. Draco, Blaise and Theodore still wanting to have a talk with Harry followed quickly. Luck was not on Harry's side as Jamie intercepted him. Her two lap dogs respectively stood behind her, sloppy defensive positions at the ready. Harry inwardly cringed. Why did his former twin sister make life so difficult for him?

Countless times Harry asked himself what he could have done to make his parents and sister loathe him so much. Quickly he pushed these feelings aside. Feeling such emotions of pity and sadness were for the weak and if there was one thing Harry was sure he was not it was weak. Long ago he had learned to lock away emotions to put 'him' literally in a trance where he couldn't bring himself to care.

When his parents had scolded him or when James had hit him this position had come in great use. His detached mind and body were of two different realms. It was pure bliss and nothing could invade the shield around his mind. Snapping back to the present he glared at Jamie who had somehow grabbed the broom.

Being dimwitted she ripped open the wrapping of the broom. She gaped widely when she saw the broom. Harry's eyes widened slightly before resuming their blank look. He would not make himself look like a fool for a broom. Expertly Harry grabbed the broom from her grasp.

Her mouth had yet to shut.

"Flies Potter flies." Harry said curtly hiding his amusement.

Draco, Blaise and Theodore caught up with Harry and stopped beside him. They too forced themselves to not show any amusement at Jamie's and Ron's gaping faces. Ron had come up now to see the broom. Hermione being muggleborn did not know the significance of the broom. She opened her mouth to offer a remark. Harry saw this and sneered.

"This Granger is a Nimbus 2000. It is the fastest, newest and most expensive broom in the wizarding world as of now. It is something your precious books won't teach you. Being smart is one thing being a know-it-all is another." He wanted a reaction. Insulting her books was sure to receive a speedy one

Hermione's eyes welled up with tears. Ron had had enough. Draco, Blaise and Theodore snapped out of their awe at the broomstick Harry was now the proud owner of. Weasley stepped forward and growled in a supposedly threatening manner. It did nothing but amuse Harry even further. Without warning Ron was at the end of four wands.

"Careful Weasley don't mess with what you don't know." Blaise said. His tone was silky and smooth laced with a threatening tone.

Weasley wisely stepped back. Jamie, however, was not as smart. She tried to seize Harry's broomstick once again.

"Give it here twerp. Obviously someone made a mistake and sent it to you instead of me. It was meant for me." Jamie insisted trying futilely to snatch the broomstick from Harry.

Harry smirked. Jamie paled. Draco, Blaise and Theodore bit their cheeks to hide their laughter. Ron had turned an ugly puce color and Granger was trembling slightly.

Professor Snape had decided to make an appearance just as Jamie had said those last words. He glowered at the red headed monster.

“What, pray tell, is the problem Ms. Potter?” He asked scathingly, almost mockingly. Harry was the only one to catch it. His lips twitched in an attempt not to smile.

“Well Snape, Harry here has what is mine and I would like it back.” She answered pompously.

Draco stared at her with both eyebrows raised. Did the bitch have a death wish? Ronald was looking amused and did not bother hiding it.

Snape was as far from amusement as Harry was from declaring his love for Jamie.

“I personally bought this broomstick for Harry as I recall. What gave you the indication that it was for you Ms. Potter?” His voice was laced with venom.

“Perhaps your head needs reduction Ms. Potter. I think in detention we will personally work on deflating your head. Getting through doors must increase in difficulty daily.” Snape mocked with false concern.

Jamie’s eyes flashed. Harry knew she could do no harm. Her magic was borderline average. She had no real power and when people would see that he would rejoice. Although he would not do this publicly because that would be demeaning and his image was everything now.

Harry was not vain but now that he had no family or surname he had to build himself a reputation and letting his emotions run free would cause many to scorn him. He barely realized when Snape had taken 50 points from Gryffindor and yelled at the Gryffindor’s to get out of his sight.

Snape turned to the four Slytherin first years.

"I hope she did not cause much trouble." His voice was blank hiding all emotion.

Harry respected Snape deeply. No matter what his despicable godfather and James said Snape was not someone to fool with. He had power, knowledge and cunning. It was a very dangerous mix and to underestimate him would be their downfall. This was one of the many reasons why Harry respected Snape.

He admired the loyalty he showed to Slytherin when everyone else scorned them.

He favoured them when no one else would. This was the one main reason Harry had first begun to respect Snape.

Snape looked over the first years. He nodded then left, trademark billow of the robes following. Harry, Draco, Blaise and Theodore walked back to the Slytherin common rooms hurriedly. They did not want anyone else to see Harry's broom. It had been decided by all four subconsciously that it would prove to be an excellent secret weapon. When they arrived in the dorms they sat admiring the broom for moments.

Theodore was the first to snap back as to why he followed Harry back.

"Why were you not here this morning?" His voice was blank letting no accusation or curiosity contaminate its tone.

Harry stared into his eyes unblinkingly until Theodore looked away. "That is my own business. But if you must know I couldn't sleep so I went to practice a potion."

Harry felt quite proud of himself. He had not completely lied. What he said was the truth, yet it was only a half-truth. It did not bother him the slightest though. He knew it was of no importance to his friends that they know of his dreams.

It was just another secret to add to his list. Perhaps one day he would tell them but not yet. He was not ready to divulge his secrets.

Draco, Blaise and Theodore unwillingly nodded. They knew Harry always meant what he said. When he told them it was his own business they knew not to ponder it anymore for he would tell them in his own time.

Luckily the rest of the day passed quickly. Classes had been the usual bore to Harry. He spent most of class reading advanced books he charmed to look like his textbooks. He had learned the first year material long ago. Currently, Harry was on the 5th year material. He would finish roughly by Yule and begin on 6th year. Harry wanted to complete all of the Hogwarts curriculum by the end of his second year so he could access the library and read up on advanced material.

To be successful he would need power and knowledge. Without knowledge he would not gain power so he vowed to learn all he could. Harry had almost perfected the disappearing spell. Soon he would be able to enter the restricted section of the library freely. It would reveal phenomenal information to him. He could not wait.

Soon nightfall came, all too soon for Harry. He was frightened slightly. What if more dreams came to him? He knew it was Voldemort but the Dark Lord seemed different. Harry had decided he was seeing Voldemort's past.

What could he do to rid himself of these dreams? Occlumency? No, he would need a teacher. He had tried once but without someone to test you, it was pointless. For now he would bear the dreams. Perhaps he would even learn something from them. Harry sighed he had many things on his mind.

Another concern besides the dreams was Quirrell. Harry still had yet find out what the item he was trying to steal could be. His only hint Nicolas Flamel. For now it would have to wait. He needed sleep tonight for tomorrow's Quidditch game. With the thought of winning or dying in his head he fell asleep. Fortuitously he had a dreamless night.

The Great hall was full of cheerful laughter and talk. Everyone was looking forward to a spectacular Quidditch match. Harry had heard the rumours that Gryffindor and Slytherin were the most exciting of the four houses when it came to rivalry. Had Harry not come to Hogwarts he would have scoffed. Being in Slytherin though just pointed out more clearly the vicious rivalry between the houses. This was why Harry had not eaten a single bite off of his plate.

"You've got to eat something," pressed Theodore concerned.

"Not hungry." Harry replied distractedly.

"Just a bit of toast?" prodded Draco.

"No, I'm quite fine thank you."

Harry felt excited, yet at the same time terrible. He would try his hardest to catch the snitch because frankly he thought if he lost he might not live to see another game.

Blaise sauntered in and sat down next to Harry.

"Why aren't you eating?" He questioned. Before Harry could reply Draco and Theodore interrupted.

"He's not hungry." They replied in unison.

Blaise made an 'oh' shape with his mouth.

"Well look at this way. Seekers are the smallest players on the team and the most important. If you don't have any strength then the other team, not to mention ours, will clobber you. Then perhaps if you're lucky you'll fall off your broom. I can think of a dozen more incidents that would make falling 50 feet to the ground seem like nothing. For instance the bludgers could very well bash into your head leaving you with a concussion, a broken nose or jaw and a fall of quite a few feet to the ground." Blaise said this hurriedly in only two breaths. He stopped his rant and took a deep breath then resumed his breakfast.

Draco and Theodore were staring at him in awe while Harry stared in horror. Quickly he shovelled eggs and toast onto his plate and devoured them. Blaise smirked knowingly.

By 11 o'clock the whole school seemed to have filled the stands around the Quidditch pitch. They sat ready to raise their flags whether they be scarlet or emerald. Students were preparing their omnioculars, although the stands were high it was still a bit difficult to see when players were on the other side of the pitch.

Meanwhile in the Slytherin changing rooms Marcus Flint was giving a pep talk. But to anyone hearing it they would agree it seemed more like he was threatening the team.

He stepped in front of the other two chasers, Montague and Pucey.

"If we don't score at least 60 points before the snitch is caught I will skin you alive then feed you to whatever monstrosity lies in the forbidden forest."

Next were the beaters, Bole and Derrick.

"I want the keeper down first. Is that clear? If you so much as shoot a bludger towards anyone on the Slytherin team I will lacerate you then infect the wounds." He growled.

The beaters nodded curtly not showing their fear.

The keeper, Bletchley, was next.

"Miss even one and you will know the meaning of castration."

Harry schooled his mask stone cold. He would not show fear although internally was an entirely different thing.

"Well twerp! Let's just say if you don't catch the snitch we'll show you how to ride a broom."

Unpleasant images popped into his head. He nodded stridently, inwardly applauding that he'd shown no apprehension.

"Time to go" Flint barked.

Harry followed Flint out of the change room. His face stony and his features controlled. He would be damned if he let them see any weakness.

Madam Hooch was refereeing. She stood in the middle of the pitch between the two teams, broom in hand.

"Now, I want a nice fair game, all of you." She said, once they were gathered around her. Harry noticed she seemed to be speaking particularly to Flint. Harry smirked inwardly. He knew the Slytherin team was brutal but despite what others thought they did not cheat excessively. Sure they found loopholes in the injury rules but that did not technically mean they cheated. Harry being a seeker did not have to worry about accusations because seekers couldn't really cheat.

"Mount your brooms please."

The Slytherin team swung their legs as one over their brooms gracefully. They smirked when the Gryffindors awkwardly clambered onto their own.

Madam Hooch gave a loud blast on her silver whistle. Fifteen brooms rose high into the air. They were off.

"And the Quaffle is immediately taken by Angelina Johnson..." Lee Jordan a 3rd year boy was commentating. Harry rose high above the game and pushed out the commentary.

The commentary could distract you. You could go from being a seeker to a viewer if you lost track of your goal. This was a mistake seekers often made while searching for the snitch.

5 minutes later with no sign of the snitch Harry started to do lazy circles around the pitch searching. His piercing gaze followed every track of gold and found no snitch. Abruptly Gryffindor cheers filled the

Pitch and Slytherin boos. Harry guessed Gryffindor had scored. He pitied the keeper at the moment.

Harry caught sight of a flash of gold. There over Adrian Pucey's shoulder was the snitch. Instantly Harry dove after it. The players had stopped what they were doing in order to watch. They hung in the field forgetting they too had a part to play. Flint conversely grabbed the Quaffle and began to score repetitively. Slytherin was now in the lead with 80 points while Gryffindor had 60.

Harry and the Gryffindor seeker were neck 'n neck chasing after the snitch. Harry put on a burst of speed. His hand was about to reach for the snitch...

WHAM!

Boos from the Slytherins and Ravenclaws filled the stadium. Professor Snape looked livid. Fred Weasley had knocked Harry out of the way on purpose causing Harry's broom to spin off course. Harry held onto his broom for dear life.

"What in world is wrong with you Fred, or George?" Lee shouted. Many Gryffindors and Hufflepuffs were slightly appalled at this behaviour but as soon as Jamie started cheering they too lost their cognizance and began cheering.

Madam Hooch spoke angrily at Fred and ordered a free penalty shot for Slytherin. Flint put the Quaffle away with some difficulty. Harry had to admit, once his broom righted itself, Oliver Wood was a remarkable keeper. Harry sighed. In all the confusion the golden snitch had disappeared one again.

Harry resumed his post above the game. Harry barely dodged out of the way of a bludger when it happened. His broom gave a sudden jerk. Harry furrowed his brows. 'What the hell is wrong now?' he thought. Harry fought not to ask for a time out when his broom gave an unexpected frightening lurch.

For a moment he thought he was going to fall. Harry gripped the broom tightly with both hands and knees.

Harry stopped all thoughts and started to think properly. 'Could this be because of the block earlier? *No*. A Nimbus 2000 was a powerful broom. There was no way a simple block like that could have done this.' Harry thought back to books he read. He couldn't fathom why his broom was acting like this.

It happened again. It was as though the broom was trying to buck him off. Desperately, Harry wondered what was wrong. The broom had been kept under locking spells and no one had touched it since he first got it. In those moments there was no way someone could have cursed it.

Harry tried to ask Flint to call a time out but he could not be heard from his height. Harry frantically tried to turn his broom back towards the ground when he realized the broom was out of control. He had no command over it whatsoever. It started zigzagging through the air rising higher and higher above the game. Every so often it would make violent swishing notions which nearly unseated Harry.

Lee was still commentating. No one had yet noticed his predicament. Suddenly everyone's eyes directed to Harry. They gasped at the wild movements of the broom. Harry tightened his hold as his broom began to roll over and over. Harry barely managed to hold on. Harry's broom gave a wild jerk and he flew off. The students gasped. Harry stuck out a hand and grabbed the broom handle.

He breathed a sigh of relief as he dangled onto the broom with one hand. Harry could see the teacher's box perfectly from here. He saw Quirrell and Snape staring at him. Their eyes were not blinking the slightest. Their lips moved slightly murmuring incantations of a sort.

Harry felt as if he could have kicked himself. Quirrell was jinxing his broom. Harry silently thanked Professor Snape for trying to save him. Next to the teacher's box were the Slytherin stands. Harry caught eye of Theodore. He pointed with his eyes to the teachers' box. Harry watched in hope as Theodore wrenched the omnioculars out of Draco's hands to look at the teacher's box.

As everyone watched Harry being flung about by his jinxed broom Marcus Flint took hold of the Quaffle and scored repeatedly bringing up Slytherin's score radically once again.

Theodore's face paled. He ran out from the Slytherin stands. Silently he crept up under the teacher's stands and set fire to Snape's robes. Harry felt like bashing his head on the Nimbus. They assumed Snape had been jinxing his broom.

Harry could have cheered when Snape stood up so abruptly he knocked over poor Professor Quirrell.

Harry let out a deep breath and swung himself back onto his broom. There beside Professor Quirrell was the snitch. Harry shot forward directly at the snitch, which did not move. At last moment the snitch took off in an almost vertical dive. Harry swerved sharply missing Quirrell by inches and dove after the snitch.

The Gryffindor seeker had seen it too by now. They raced neck 'n neck for the snitch still diving. 50 feet...40...30...20...10... The Gryffindor seeker pulled up. Harry kept diving after it. At 3 feet Harry pulled up harshly and grabbed the snitch.

The Slytherins and Ravenclaws cheered loudly. The level of noise blocked out the miserable boos from the Gryffindors.

"Harry has caught the snitch Slytherin wins 250 to 80." Lee Jordan's voice betrayed his disappointment.

Down on the Pitch Harry was immediately picked up and placed on the shoulders of Derrick and Bole, the Slytherin beaters. They carried him to the common room on their shoulders. Harry could see the amusement and joy in his friends' faces. He grinned.

The Slytherins followed the Slytherin Quidditch team to the common rooms cheering and talking in high spirits. Because of the amount of points they scored they would only need to beat Ravenclaw to win the Quidditch cup. The Slytherin team knew they could take out Hufflepuff easily and after Gryffindor, Ravenclaw would not be much of a challenge. All in all they saw the Quidditch cup in their hands for the 8th year in a row.

The Slytherin party lasted well into the night. Harry thanked the gods that the next day was Sunday. Draco, Blaise, Theodore and Harry tiredly made their way into the first year boy's dorm. Inside they all sat

on Draco's bed. There were things to be discussed before they went to bed.

"Snape jinxed your broom." Theodore said breaking the tension.

Harry shook his head. "Quirrell jinxed my broom. Snape was trying to save me."

"But I saw Snape quite clearly. Face it Harry Most evidence points to Snape. The bite on his leg, the amount of information he knows and now he just tried to kill you." Theodore's voice was resolute.

"I doubt Snape would tell me all he knew except for what Fluffy's guarding if he were after it."

"Well he could have just said that to throw you off track." Blaise interrupted before Theodore could speak.

Draco nodded in agreement. Harry glared at them.

"Fine, think what you want but I still believe its Quirrell. Stuttering never goes as far as an entire sentence. Usually people who stutter have vocal problems or are afraid. And even then they only stutter the first word or two not the entire sentence. It seems to me he's acting to pull off an innocent look. Professor Snape and I are the only ones seeing through it now but just you wait. You'll see in the end I was right."

Harry glared at them once again before storming over to his bed. He pulled the curtains tightly around him and prepared to sleep. He hoped no dreams would come to him. Unfortunately the night held no mercy for Harry as he succumbed into the violence of another dream.

Chapter 6

Dragon, oh my!

:Dream:

Harry recognized the setting this time. He was on the Hogwarts Express. It must have been September 1st. He began walking absentmindedly his feet leading him to an unknown compartment. The compartment was the last one on the train Harry noted quietly having regained his senses.

Inside was a boy, no older than 11. His sable hair was wavy and primed. His clothes however looked out of place. Instead of well-groomed clothes of muggle attire or wizarding robes he wore what looked to be rags. His pants were long and ripped in many places and his shirt had faded from black to gray. Harry could tell he was poor.

The boy turned from facing his window to looking around the compartment in dismay. Harry could see the longing— he desired friends. Harry knew the feeling. When he was younger Jamie had officially banished him from being around other people. His parents being mindless idiots allowed it. At times he fought verbally against them but it only seemed to anger James into punishing him.

Harry felt sympathy towards the boy. He would not feel pity for him because he knew it would not be wanted. The boy turned to look at the door just past where Harry stood. It was then Harry saw his eyes. They were an enchanting blue that was as hard as stone and as cool as ice. Harry knew that look. He had worn it many times himself. The boy continued to stare at the door. It flung back and in entered four boys.

From their demeanour Harry could tell they were going to end up in Gryffindor. They wore fancy clothes of various shades of red and gold. Harry scrunched up his nose in disgust, how utterly revolting. Red and Gold were garish and obscene when worn too much and in these boys it was the epitome of perfect little Gryffindor.

The leader, Harry presumed, stepped forward menacingly. His black hair was an utter mess and his eyes were a dull hazel. Harry's eyes widened. It was none other than his grandfather Harold Potter. Harry did not particularly care for his grandfather. Since his grandmother died he had locked himself away from the boorish public.

Harry examined the other boys as well. The second-in-command stood one step to the right of Harold. His hair was a light brown with lighter highlights. His face was slightly chubby and his eyes were a pale blue. Harry remembered a picture his grandfather had once shown him when he was quite young. It seemed that these 4 young boys were the same 4 men he had seen.

The brown haired one was none other than Andrew Bones. The other two stood to the sides of their leaders looking quite like the muscle although they themselves were not quite large. To the left stood a red haired, freckled and blue-eyed boy that Harry remembered was Fredric Weasley. The boy to the right had dirty blonde hair and a mix of green and hazel eyes. His name was Jonathan Flamel, nephew of Nicolas Flamel.

Harry looked back at the boy who now faced the four wand drawn. His face was contorted in anger. Harold Potter looked amused by this. He had his own wand drawn as well.

"What are you doing here boy. Hogwarts doesn't accept the likes of you." His voice was haughty.

The boy fumed silently. "My name is Tom Marvolo Riddle and obviously since I am on the train I have been accepted. Now get out." He snapped.

Weasley laughed. "What's the matter Tom? Are you poor, underfed and beaten at home or do you indulge in looking like a beggar?"

Tom was seething now, "I suggest you leave before I lose my temper." His voice was soft yet deadly.

The others however did not seem to be fazed by this. They stood in their positions ready to take the taunt further.

Bones glared at the boy fiercely. "Hogwarts shouldn't accept filthy snakes like you."

Tom's eyes narrowed but he kept them on Harold. "Hogwarts can accept whoever it wants. If it were up to it you wouldn't be standing here contaminating the train and later the school."

Bones lunged but Flamel kept him in check. "Not yet Andy. We'll get him. After all what could he do to us?" Bones snorted.

That seemed to snap the thin straw that was Tom's anger. He flicked his wand and cried 'Expelliarmus' four times sending each boy crashing out of the compartment. Harry smirked. Whoever this Tom was must have been powerful. He resolved to find out who this mysterious Tom Riddle was.

Tom gasped in surprise as he turned from shutting the compartment door.

"Who are you?" He asked pointing his wand at Harry.

Harry's eyes widened. Had he become visible suddenly? He decided to go along.

"I'm Harry. Pleasure to meet you Tom. Have you seen those boys before or was that their first visit?" Harry sat down.

Tom lowered his wand. "Hello Harry. Do you have a surname?" He looked at the compartment door then back at Harry. "Those boys just came now. Everyone has been teasing me about my attire. I grew up at an orphanage so you see I can't afford proper clothes."

Harry looked at him sympathetically before his eyes hardened. "I have no last name. Actually, I'm not even from here. I doubt anyone else can see me. I'm from the future. Right now I'm dreaming and somehow I've ended up here. That boy Harold Potter was my former grandfather. I was disowned for being a Slytherin."

Tom smiled grimly. "My mother died and my father abandoned me. Looks like we're in the same boat."

Harry smiled slightly. "Want to be friends? I think I can manipulate my dream to become this every night. I've read books on dream structure and wizards can shape their dreams to a certain extent."

Tom's smile widened. "Thanks. I want a friend. Everyone seems to judge me on my appearance. It'll be nice to have someone to talk to besides the snakes." He raised his hand.

Harry shook it and smirked. "You're a parselmouth also?"

"A parselmouth? I haven't been able to get past the first year curriculum. I plan to spend most of my time reading. There is so much I have yet to learn. I want to show them all that I will be powerful. I don't want to be walked over all my life."

"A parselmouth is someone who can talk to snakes. Don't advertise it though, people believe it to be dark. I'm one also."

Tom smirked. "Well that makes things easier I guess."

Harry smirked back. Harry liked this boy's company. Something about him was intriguing. Unlike many people he had talked to this boy was intelligent. He swore to perfect dream manipulation to meet Tom Riddle again. For now it seemed he had to go.

"I have to go Tom. I have no idea when I'll reappear again but don't forget me." Harry said softly.

"Goodbye Harry. I won't forget. Please come back soon." His eyes were pleading although his face was indifferent.

Harry started to fade from his dream.

:End Dream:

Harry jolted awake, his breath coming out in soft pants. Harry took a deep breath to regain his breathing rhythm. He thought back to his dream. It had been odd but exciting enough. He couldn't wait to see more of Tom. Perhaps they could help each other. Since only Tom could see him they could perhaps study together at times. Both might learn something new with two different perspectives.

Harry stopped his train of thought and muttered a quick tempus spell. It was 7 o'clock. He had an hour before having to go to breakfast. Harry could hear Draco's soft breathing coming from the bed next to him. Obviously Draco had yet to awake. Harry gingerly walked to Draco's bed trying to ignore the cold stone floor.

He prodded Draco. "Wake up Draco."

Draco opened bleary eyes. "Okay you go ahead."

Harry cast a suspicious eye on Draco but left him. Quickly he did his morning ritual of cleaning and dressing. When he came out of the bathroom Draco and he shared Harry saw Draco was still asleep. With half an hour to breakfast left he decided to wake Draco in a slightly more effective way.

He took a running start and jumped on Draco's bed causing the mattress to flip Draco onto the floor. Harry fell onto to the bed and laughed. His eyes were closed as he laughed. Harry tried desperately to calm down as the pain in his ribs became unbearable. Finally with great heaving gasps he calmed down. Unfortunately he did not see Draco sneaking up on him.

Just as Harry saw him, Draco pounced. He mercilessly tickled Harry to the point where he could not breathe properly.

"Mercy!" Harry choked out trying to push Draco off him.

Draco stopped his tickling and smirked triumphantly. He rolled off of Harry and proceeded to get dressed and such. Harry stood up calmly and fixed his messy hair. He looked into the mirror and started to fix his hair. Since coming to school and meeting Draco he had begun to put gel in his hair to make it more controllable. Instead of the messy mop it had been it looked more like he had styled it to look messy. In this Harry found he looked much better and more sophisticated.

Draco entered the room shortly after Harry managed to control his hair once again. Together they left for the great hall talking about the stealth spells they had looked up. By now all of them had managed the silencing charm, the extended hearing charm, the scent dispersal charm and various glamour charms. Harry had been the only one

successful so far with the invisibility charm. It had not worked in the slightest for the other boys yet. Harry figured either they were not performing it right or it had to be a complicated and powerful charm.

He guessed the former most likely. After breakfast the four headed their separate ways. Blaise, Draco and Theodore ended up going to the library to finish their homework, look up more stealth charms and research Nicolas Flamel. Harry on the other hand decided to visit Hagrid.

Harry knocked on Hagrid's door. He was curious as to why there was so much smoke coming out of the chimney and why all the curtains were drawn. It must have been stifling hot inside the cabin by now. Hagrid opened the door ever so slightly and peeked out. His eyes widened slightly he saw Harry standing there. A smile broke out on his face.

"Arry good teh see yer there! Come in!" Hagrid's voice was oddly quieter than normal. Harry sensed he was worried about something.

Harry stepped in quickly and shut the door behind him. He looked at Hagrid curiously.

"What's wrong?" He asked politely.

"Arry, yer goin to love this! Hagrid ushered him to the table where a very large black egg rested. Harry's eyes widened.

"A dragon!" He exclaimed.

"Norwegian Ridgeback. Got 'im off a feller in the pub." Hagrid beamed proudly.

Harry stared at the egg in wonder. "Wow." Suddenly he frowned.

"Hagrid, you can't keep him." Harry said frowning slightly. Truth be known, he was rather interested in the dragon. He would have liked to study it further but then again the dragon could cause many problems when it grew.

Hagrid's large smile drooped drastically. "I thought you'd be interested in 'im 'Arry."

Harry looked at the man slightly apologetically. "I am Hagrid. But you live in a wooden hut and when this dragon gets bigger it will cause many problems. It'd be best if we sent him off to a colony." Harry reasoned.

Hagrid sighed sadly. "I suppose you're right 'Arry."

A crack caught their attention.

"It's hatching." Harry breathed out awestruck.

The egg cracked again. They waited as more cracks formed in the eggshell. After waiting half an hour the egg burst open. From it stumbled out a dragon. Harry cooed at it inwardly. No matter how adorable it seemed he would not displace his mask.

Hagrid however cooed at it scratching lightly under its chin.

Harry watched amazed as the dragon took in its surroundings. Taking a deep breath he reached out and pet the Ridgeback's head. The dragon omitted a slight sound, which sounded like a purr and a bark.

Hagrid laughed admiring his pet dragon.

"Norbert." He said decisively.

"Norbert?" Harry asked.

"Well he's got to 'ave a name an' I think Norbert suits him."

Harry stared for a moment at Norbert before nodding. "Yes it does suit him."

Hagrid sighed fondly at the dragon. Harry frowned slightly. He would have to help Hagrid get Norbert to a dragon colony. There was no way Hagrid could keep him. But he couldn't do this alone. He needed to ask someone for help, but who?

A sudden idea struck him.

“Hagrid! I’m going to ask Professor Snape to help me contact a dragon colony. We can send Norbert on his way then. Meanwhile keep him concealed. Let no one into your hut either. No one else can know about this. Since the egg is hatched it would be best to put out the fire. Since the curtains are closed students may think you are not here.” Harry’s voice had taken a commanding tone.

Hagrid looked at Harry slightly wary. “Alright ‘Arry. But I’m only agreeing because I trust you.”

Harry beamed before slipping on his indifferent mask. “I’ll go talk to Professor Snape right now. Hopefully he’ll know what to do. I trust him enough that I know he will not try to have you sacked. I’ll be back tomorrow after classes. Will that be alright Hagrid?” The question however needn’t be answered as you could hear the ‘no options other than what I’m offering’ tone behind the polite words.

Hagrid nodded his goodbye and went outback to gather some strung possums for Norbert.

Harry took the shortest route to Professor Snape’s office. He knocked sharply hoping to whatever deity that Snape was there. A moment later the door opened and an irritable Snape stood in the doorway. His eyes however softened slightly and his tense posture relaxed. He ushered Harry inside.

“How can I help you Harry?” His voice was devoid of any emotion.

“Sir, I have a lot to ask of you and it has to do with Hagrid as well. I need your confidentiality before I can tell you.”

Snape’s eyes narrowed suspiciously. He took out his wand and placed silencing spells around the room and warded the door.

“You have it. Now speak.”

Harry refrained from biting his lip like a nervous 6 year old but could not help swallow heavily before speaking.

“You see Professor, Hagrid likes many dangerous animals as do I. But Hagrid enjoys having these animals as pets. I went over for tea

today but to my surprise I found a dragon egg on his dining table.” Harry coughed slightly.

Snape pinched his nose in agitation. “Damn that oaf. I suppose you’re not here to tell me that the school should dismiss him.”

Harry shook his head. “No sir. I want to help him. Hagrid is excellent at his job and his size is perfect for handling dangerous creatures, especially ones in the forest. I was hoping you would know of a dragon colony where Norbert, the dragon, could go. I heard there was one in Romania but I’m not positive.”

Snape looked at Harry appraisingly. “Very well Harry. I shall assist you with this. There is a dragon colony in Romania. Charlie Weasley has a job there working with dragons. I will compose a letter to ask if he can utilize a group to acquire the dragon.” He looked dour at the thought of helping.

Harry smiled slightly, allowing his mask to slip a little. “Thank you Professor Snape.”

With that Harry left to the Owlery to compose a letter to Charlie Weasley. On the way he had taken some writing supplies. In the Owlery’s tall tower Harry looked for a spot to sit. After using many cleaning charms he produced a place free of straw and owl droppings. Quickly he set to work.

Charlie Weasley,

Hello Mr. Weasley. I apologize since you probably do not remember me but I need your help. My former name was Harry Potter, but now it is just Harry. You used to come with your family to Potter manor. I remember only seeing you twice and you have probably long forgotten me.

But to get to the point, I need your help and perhaps a few of your friends’ help as well. Hagrid the Hogwarts grounds keeper has obtained a Norwegian Ridgeback. We cannot have a dragon on school grounds nor can I allow Hagrid to be sacked for having one.

I have heard from one of my Professors that you work in a dragon colony. If it is possible I hope perhaps you will take the dragon from Hogwarts to prevent any injury. I know for a fact that Norwegian Ridgebacks are rare and this one would be a positive member in the colony.

If you deem this possible please write back A.S.A.P.

Thank you and best wishes,

Harry.

Harry sighed. It was not his best work but it would do. Loud footsteps alerted him to someone's presence. He stood up and brushed the dirt off himself. The person stepped around the doorway and into the Owlery. Harry groaned inwardly. *Just what I needed*, he thought.

Jamie Potter stood staring at him in distaste.

"What have you got there Harry?" She asked in a sickly sweet voice.

Harry ignored her. He walked around her to find an owl. As Harry walked by Jamie tripped him and grabbed the note he composed. All colour drained from his face as she read it. Stupidly she threw the note on the ground.

"Well, well looks like you're not going to graduate from Hogwarts after all." She ran off to find Professor McGonagall.

Harry quickly rolled up the parchment and secured it to a large barn owl.

"Take this to Charlie Weasley in Romania. Be quick about it!" Harry snapped. He dashed out of the Owlery and ran to the dungeons.

He had a plan forming in his mind as he ran. Luckily no one was there when he ran into Professor Snape.

Snape glowered at him.

"Sir, Potter grabbed the letter before I could stop her. She's on her way to Professor McGonagall. I have a plan but I needed your permission." Harry gasped out quickly.

"Well? What is it?" Snape snapped already irritated by helping Hagrid.

"You could tell her I have been with you all morning observing the brewing of a dreamless sleep potion."

Snape smirked at him. "I shall go along with this Harry. It is quite clever as I have been brewing potions this morning."

Harry smirked back.

"Goodbye Sir." Harry walked calmly to the Great Hall for dinner. He was ravenous, as he had missed lunch. Harry had dinner with his friends who told him about their day. Harry learned of a few new charms as well throughout dinner which would come in handy for Norbert. Draco and Harry left earlier than Blaise and Theodore. They walked back to their rooms slowly in silence. Close to the Slytherin common rooms Professor McGonagall and Jamie Potter intercepted them

"I would like to speak with you Mr....Harry." McGonagall told him sternly.

Harry nodded allowing a slightly confused look in his eyes to appear. He made sure Professor McGonagall saw it. They walked to her office in silence. Although Jamie took much of the time to sneer improperly at Harry. Harry often wondered whether she was practicing on him or if that was all she could do.

"Ms. Potter has told me a detailed account of Hagrid having a dragon Harry. Is this true?" Professor McGonagall peered at him from above her glasses.

"No ma'am. I have no idea how she could make up such a ridiculous tale. I have been with Professor Snape this entire day observing Dreamless Sleep potion preparation. It takes quite a few hours to brew." Harry's voice was business like.

McGonagall narrowed her eyes slightly. "Very well. We shall speak to Professor Snape about this."

Harry nodded his consent. She walked over to her fire and threw in a pinch of flew powder.

"Professor Severus Snape's office!"

A moment later Snape's head appeared in the fire. He looked piercingly at Harry as he did whenever a teacher reported a student.

"Professor Snape have you been with Harry all day?" McGonagall asked sharply.

"Yes. As I recall his Potions grade is exceptionally high. This is an extra assignment he is working on. Dreamless Sleep potion however takes up much time and needs to be watched carefully. What may I ask has my pupil done?" Snape asked sarcastically.

"Your pupil has fed lies and ridiculous tales to Ms. Potter in hopes of getting her a detention." She responded bitinglly.

Snape's eyes narrowed at her with distain evident. "If that is all Minerva." Snape disappeared without further word.

"10 points will be taken from Slytherin for your lack of respect towards a students and a detention." Harry refrained from glaring at her.

Instead he nodded and left.

Inside his room Draco was waiting up for him. When Harry arrived Draco looked at him pointedly.

"What was that all about?"

Harry fell back on his bed warily.

"I'll tell you but you must keep it a secret. You cannot tell even Blaise and Theodore."

Draco nodded looking serious.

“Hagrid has an illegal dragon. Professor Snape is helping me with the dragon. I wrote a letter to Charlie Weasley who works in a dragon colony asking if they could come and take it. Jamie was there and she tripped me to read the letter. She told McGonagall but I fed her some story about being with Professor Snape all day. Snape confirmed it and McGonagall took 10 points and gave me a detention for telling her students ‘ridiculous tales’.” Harry’s voice remained monotonous as he spoke.

Draco stared at him wide-eyed.

“Can I help?” He asked immediately.

Harry stared at him hard. “No. Hagrid won’t trust you with Norbert yet. I’m sorry Drake but it’s for your own good.”

Draco scowled slightly but nodded anyways.

“Thanks for telling me at least.” He said.

Harry smiled at him from his bed. “What are friends for?”

Draco grinned allowing the mask to slip off.

“Go to sleep.” Harry said yawning. “Tomorrow is going to be hell and I don’t plan to be disoriented.”

Draco nodded yawning as well.

“Good night Harry.”

“Night Draco.” Harry murmured half asleep already.

Chapter 7

Charlie's help

Harry felt ready to sleep when his previous dream returned to him. His eyes snapped open and he contemplated how he could have gone back 50 years or so. His dream self was like a memory sort of. But no one else could see him. Perhaps his dreams were connected to Tom Riddle. Could it be that only Tom could see him because he was a memory and ghost-like formation transferred to Tom's mind?

But, how could that be? He was solid when he shook hands with Tom. He would have to look further into this. He had read about dream manipulation but nothing like this had ever been written down in those books.

There must be something connecting me to Tom, but what? Harry thought.

He sighed. He knew he wasn't travelling back in time as his body remained in the present. Something linking them had produced a clone of Harry able to exist during Tom's school years. That was probably why only Tom could see him. Harry sighed. This would be something to research once again through the extensive Hogwarts library. For now he would sleep and try to manipulate his dream. Influencing dreams was not difficult, contrary to popular belief. It only seems so because those trying do not often have enough willpower to do so. Harry fell asleep thinking of Tom.

:Dream:

Harry was standing in a dorm room with only one bed. He looked around cautiously for any signs of Tom. When there was no sign of the boy Harry sat heavily on the bed.

"Harry?" Tom's voice was quiet and timid.

Harry's eyes darted to the doorway where a still 11-year-old Tom Riddle appeared.

"Hi Tom. I see you were sorted into Slytherin. Congratulations."

Tom smiled and sat down next to him unloading many books from his bag.

"Thanks. I haven't got any friends. The Slytherins look down on me because I'm a half-blood. I don't really mind, as I never had many friends at the orphanage either. I've been reading loads to catch up in wizarding customs. It's surprisingly easy." Harry smiled at Tom's enthusiasm.

"What day is it Tom? I don't know how long it's passed since I've visited you."

Tom raised an eyebrow. "I forgot about that. It's been almost a month since you came. I had hoped you would come sooner but I suppose it's not really your choice is it?"

Harry shook his head. "No. I honestly have no idea if I can also induce day or time. Has anything happened since then? Anything interesting?"

Tom frowned slightly. "No. It's been dreadfully boring. I like Hogwarts all the same though. It's more of a home to me than the orphanage. Thank goodness it won't be closing anytime soon."

Harry nodded. "Hogwarts had become more of a home for me than my previous one as well. I don't know exactly where I'll be going during the summer. I think I will most likely be staying at Hogwarts or perhaps one of my friends will allow me to stay for the summer."

Tom looked at Harry thoughtfully, "We're quite alike."

Harry's face took a pensive look. He lay back on the bed. Tom followed his example and fell back carefully as to not squash the books.

"Yes, it seems that way does it not? Both half-bloods. Both orphaned, you by death and abandonment and me by disowning."

Tom smirked. "Don't forget we're both studious and calculating. Slytherins, intelligent, and have had no lovely childhood."

Harry snorted softly. "We even look alike."

Tom outright laughed at this point. Harry sighed heavily. "We could have been brothers and no one would know the difference."

"I wish you were here Harry. I like my privacy, and I'm not a social person but it'd nice to have one person at least that I can talk to."

Harry smiled. "I know what you mean. I like my friends but they don't know what I've been through. They couldn't possibly understand what it feels like."

Tom nodded. He froze for a second his face contorting into a thoughtful look. "Harry, how would you like to come to classes with me? It's almost time for lunch break to end. I have Transfiguration at the moment would you like to come? If you're still here after class we can go to the library as well. Perhaps we can search more on this dream manipulation as you call it?"

Harry's face broke out into a grin. "Excellent! Let's go." He said eagerly. "Whom do you have Transfiguration with?"

"Professor Albus Dumbledore." Tom scowled.

Harry froze in mid-step turning to look at Tom incredulously.

"Dumbledore? Wow. He's headmaster in my time." Harry saw the scowl lining Tom's face before he could change his expression. "What is it?"

Tom furrowed his brow slightly and frowned. "Ever since I've gotten here he's been watching me more than the other students. I could swear he thinks I'm up to something. All the other teachers think I am relatively adequate except him."

Harry mechanically bit his lip. His mind was a whirl of thoughts as to why. "I have no sound theory as of now. I'll observe him in your class though. Maybe we shall figure out why he has this interest in you. In

my time he practically ignores me. Dumbledore just wants to be in the good graces of my former parents and their demon spawn.” Harry said venomously.

Tom pursed his lips slightly before letting a mask of cold indifference fall over his face. “Let’s go. Hopefully we’ll find what that coot is looking for in me.”

Harry nodded curtly still in a foul mood from thinking of the Potters. His mask slipped into place mechanically although no others would be able to see him. Together they walked at a brisk pace to the Transfiguration classroom. Tom took a seat in the middle off to the side so he could see the front perfectly but not be in the line of vision of Dumbledore.

“Charm one of your quills invisible so only you and I can see it. You don’t want to draw attention to yourself by talking to someone that isn’t there.” Harry instructed.

Tom gave him the barest of nods and did as he said. Harry felt around for his wand and almost grinned when he felt it in his robe. He whipped it out and placed a complicated charm preventing anyone other than Tom and himself from reading the parchment. To anyone else it would look like a blank sheet.

Students began filing into the room talking jovially. They took their seats with their friends and looked forward. Minutes later Dumbledore stepped through the door closing it with a flick of his wand. He smiled brightly at the students who fell quiet and looked to the head of the room in rapt attention.

“Good afternoon students!”

“Good afternoon Professor Dumbledore.” Came the united response of the class

Dumbledore beamed at them. “Today we shall be transfiguring toothpicks into matchboxes.” Dumbledore flicked his wand and toothpicks appeared in front of everyone.

Harry tuned him out as he explained instructions. He already knew how to do this. "Tom you do the assignment while I observe Dumbledore more closely."

Tom looked down at his toothpick indicating he understood. Harry stepped out from the desk they sat at and walked up to the front of the room. He stood directly in front of Dumbledore so he could see what the man looked at and his facial expressions. Dumbledore smiled encouragingly towards most of the students. When his eyes reached Tom they darkened slightly indicating a slight wariness and suspicion.

Harry watched Dumbledore's every move for the entire session of the class before returning to their desks 15 minutes before the class ended.

"He seems highly suspicious of you. I think he has some idea in his mind that you will do something to warrant more than a detention."

Tom scribbled furiously on the charmed parchment making sure Dumbledore wasn't looking.

"I have done no such thing yet. How in Merlin's name has he come to such a conclusion? I bet it was that conniving old bat at the orphanage. She never did like me after I burnt her wig."

Harry stared at Tom oddly before shaking his head. "Do I even want to know?"

She murdered one of my snakes. He was an old one so it didn't matter to the others as much.

Harry scowled. "Bitch."

Tom smirked.

That is an understatement. I may be darker than the others but it doesn't mean I'm going to go on a killing frenzy and murder all the students.

Harry snorted. "I completely agree with you. Shall we go the bell has rung."

Tom carefully placed his books away and grabbed the parchment and quill. Tom placed them in his robe pocket and walked out of the room missing Dumbledore's curious stare. Harry however didn't. He narrowed his eyes and followed Tom to the library. When they reached Tom went to the very back and sat at a table in a slightly cramped alcove.

Harry did not sit. "I'm going to get the books I can on dream manipulation and bring them here. I'll also search in my time for any updated books or new ones."

Tom nodded and set his bag down taking a seat to wait. Harry returned shortly after with two books.

"This is all they have. It's not a very common subject so it isn't very surprising." He sighed irritated. "Hopefully there will be more books in my time."

Tom nodded thoughtfully and took one of the books. "Let's read up what we can. Maybe in one of these books we can find what is happening to you." Harry sat down and opened the other book hoping it would enlighten the two.

"Well this is useless. These books hold little to no detail which I did not already know!" Harry snapped frustrated.

Tom set down his own books with a sigh. "It was interesting at least. I hardly knew anything about dream interpretations or manipulations. But I suppose this is a dead end. Neither of us have any money either so we cannot owl-order books on it either. We can only be optimistic about your time's library to have more. If you find anything write it down and keep it with your wand. I think it should come with you as well next time you come back."

Harry cursed under his breath. "I'm fading. I'll see you sometime Tom. Bye."

Tom looked slightly dejected. "Keep looking Harry. I'll see you. Good bye."

:End Dream:

:New Dream:

Harry frowned. He wasn't awake and back in present time. It seems he was having another dream. He looked around at his settings. It was a small village. Unlike Hogsmede this one looked to be in a muggle community. Out of the corner of his eye Harry saw a familiar man. It was Voldemort.

He was younger once again and his hood obscured his face. Harry followed him as he walked further into the village. At the end was a large manor on top of a hill. As he walked behind the younger Voldemort he saw a sign that indicated this little town was called Little Hangleton.

They walked to the manor steadily. Voldemort's gaze never wavered from the manor. Harry watched curiously as Voldemort unlocked the door and swept in, silently as ever. He walked up the steps creating little to no sound. Down the hallway to the furthest room was the main bedroom. Inside the room were a man and his wife sleeping peacefully.

Voldemort slammed the door behind him causing the sleeping couple to jolt awake. The man's eyes narrowed at the intruder while the wife looked on pitifully, fearfully.

"Who are you?" The elder man spat.

Voldemort ignored him and raised his wand.

"What the..." The man began but never got to finish.

"Crucio!" The man screamed and convulsed violently. His wife screamed his name but Harry could not hear it over the man's screams and his own. The power of the curse was intimidating. Harry convulsed on the ground behind Voldemort feeling the curse.

Voldemort stopped the curse. Before either the man or woman could say anything he spoke the two deadly words of death.

"Avada Kedavra!" Voldemort hissed fury seeping into his tone.

The woman shrieked and held onto her dead husband like a lifeline. Voldemort sneered nastily at the woman.

"Do you see muggle? You are nothing in this world. All of your kind will be slaughtered like the filthy animals you are. Mudbloods are not welcome in this world any longer." His voice was like poison seeping into the woman's mind making her tremble. She realized her life would end at that moment and gave up. Clutching her husband to her chest she stared at Voldemort frightfully yet defiantly.

"You bastard! May your soul rot in hell!" Her voice was biting.

Voldemort paid no attention. "Avada Kedavra!" And she too slumped on top of her deceased husband.

:End Dream:

Harry thanked whatever gods listening that he had placed silencing charms around his curtains. It kept all sound within his bed area. He panted heavily wincing at the pain in his limbs. Moving slowly he crawled to the edge of his bed where his trunk lay. Carefully he opened the trunk as to not wake Draco. Inside a hidden compartment were the remaining vials of the pain-reducing potion for the Cruciatus.

Harry uncorked one and drank it. The potion worked immediately numbing his limbs at first then reducing the pain 'til none was left. Harry placed the empty vial back into the compartment, locked it and closed his trunk. He yawned widely and moved to get ready for the day.

Draco woke up shortly after Harry finished dressing.

"Draco, I need you to deter the guys from looking for me. Make up any excuse. I need to get to Hagrid's so I can help with Norbert." Harry looked at Draco for confirmation that he would do it.

Draco pursed his lips slightly but saw the pleading look in Harry's eyes. He caved easily.

"Alright Harry. But you're coming to breakfast with us at least."

Harry nodded happily. They walked out and waited for their friends in the common room. Blaise and Theodore came out shortly and were surprised to see Harry there.

"What? No sudden emergency to get to or something to research?" Blaise asked teasingly.

Harry smirked. "Actually I can stay for breakfast and a little after. At about 10 I'll need to leave for the day. If all goes well I'll be here for the evening as well. I do apologize but I will be able to spend more time with you after tomorrow."

Theodore grinned. "Well then lets get today over with then. I actually miss your knowledgeable information and cynical remarks."

Harry glared half-heartedly. "I pride myself on those."

Draco snorted. "I doubt you have anything else to pride yourself on."

Harry swatted Draco on the arm. "Now, now be nice Draco or you won't get any dessert."

Draco glared. "Touch my dessert and I shall cut off your hands."

Harry smiled menacingly. "And I shall castrate you by muggle means. I enjoy your sarcasm and only for that reason would I not turn you into a eunuch."

Draco stepped back slightly at the gleam in Harry's eyes. Harry smirked. "I thought so. Shall we go?" He asked pleasantly.

Blaise and Theo snickered but followed Harry out of the common room. Draco stood staring for a moment before rushing after them. As they stepped out of the common room their masks fell into place.

Harry sat next to Draco, across from Blaise and Theodore waiting for a letter from Charlie. A small barn owl swooped down and landed in front of Harry. He untied the letter and opened it cautiously keeping eye of unwanted readers.

Harry,

I remember you quite well actually. You were very quiet whenever we came over. I thought you seemed a bit smarter for your age and I guess I was right. How are you doing after all these years? We would very much like to take the Norwegian Ridgeback off your hands.

My friends and I will be there by tomorrow night at midnight. Please have the dragon set by then and on top of the astronomy tower. I look forward to meeting you now that you have grown slightly.

It was astounding that the Potters disowned you. They were always a nice lot in my opinion but I guess everyone has their hidden personalities. Is Jamie still the spoilt little brat I remember?

I can't believe my brother would befriend her. I honestly thought he was a better judge of character. I suppose her fame has gotten to him. He was always one for the spotlight.

I wonder why the Potters disowned you. You seem like a charming young chap. I should probably end this letter now.

Sincerely,

Charlie Weasley

P.S – No need to call me Mr. Weasley, it makes me feel old. Call me Charlie.

Harry bit the inside of his cheeks to stop the grin. He settled for a smirk. Norbert was going tomorrow night. Although it would be sad to miss the interesting beast grow up it would be safer for everyone. And he also seemed to be gaining a friend in Charlie.

The rest of breakfast was enjoyable with light teasing and sarcastic remarks. As they were leaving breakfast to lounge outside they met with a familiar unwanted trio.

Jamie glowered at Harry. Her hands placed firmly on her hips. Her two sidekicks glared at the four boys.

“And what do I owe this superfluous visit?” Harry asked calmly.

“You’ll be expelled for having that dragon on school grounds! Professor McGonagall will come to her senses immediately and then we’ll see who has the last laugh!” Jamie said snidely.

Draco smirked. “Your wit astounds me.” He said sarcastically.

Jamie turned red in anger. “Shut up you stupid arse!”

Theodore raised an eyebrow. “What foul language for a lady.”

Blaise looked at her in disdain. “Amazing that you pass as a human let alone as a girl.”

Jamie was an ugly puce colour at the moment. Her red hair clashed terribly with her face making her look like an overripe tomato.

“I’m writing to Mum and Dad about this! Just because you aren’t their son anymore doesn’t mean they won’t find some way to punish you for what you did to me!”

Harry looked at her skeptically. “And what have I done?”

“You’ve embarrassed me more than once. You’ve insulted me and you’ve gotten higher grades than me.” She said snootily.

Theodore looked at her in faux curiosity. “Granger has higher grades than you. Are you going to ‘punish’ her as well?”

“Of course not” She snapped. “I’m allowing Hermione to have higher grades than me so her parents will be proud of her. Everyone knows I’m smart they’ll just think I’m an even better person for being so charitable.”

Harry refrained from laughing. "Oh and if you are as intelligent as you claim than surely you can think of something better as revenge than telling Lily and James Potter."

Jamie fumed. "Of course I will! Let's go Hermione, Ron."

Ron tried to shove Draco as they walked past but Draco easily sidestepped him.

"Well it seems she's taken up the time I was going to spend with you this morning." Harry said irritably. "I'll see you tonight."

Before they could utter a word he swept off. Blaise and Theodore turned to Draco.

"Do you know where he's going?"

Draco sighed. "He said something about research. Come on let's go finish our homework so we can do something later."

Theodore nodded but looked at Draco suspiciously. Together they set off.

Harry meanwhile had walked to Hagrid's. The groundskeeper had invited him in merrily.

"Hey Hagrid, How are you and Norbert?" Harry asked politely petting the dragon on the head.

"We're fine. I admit I'm a little sad that he's goin' so soon. Bu' it'd be for the best."

"He'll be gone tomorrow night Hagrid. I got Charlie's reply this morning." Harry looked curiously at the small tube lining Norbert's teeth.

"Say Hagrid, is this a venom duct?" Harry asked inquisitively.

Hagrid looked to where Harry was pointing. "Yep that'd be where 'is venom comes from."

“Could I get a sample? I’m rather fascinated with its effects in potions.”

Hagrid looked hesitant before nodding. “Alrigh’ ‘Arry. You hold this vial under and I’ll milk his venom pods.”

Harry nodded compliantly. He held the vial under the Dragon’s tooth slightly cautious. It wouldn’t do any good to have a Dragon bite him now. Slowly Hagrid began to milk the pod filling the vial with a mossy green like liquid. When the vial was nearly full Hagrid accidentally squeezed the pod too hard.

Norbert growled and snapped his jaws effectively biting Harry’s hand. Harry bit his lip from crying out. Venom spurted from his teeth filling both Harry’s hand and the vial with venom.

Harry corked the vial and placed it in his inner clothing. Hagrid calmed Norbert and tethered him in the corner away from Harry. He paled when he saw the large bite mark on Harry’s hand. Harry took one of the large napkins from Hagrid’s table and wrapped it around his bleeding hand. Seeing Hagrid’s pale and frightened face he thought fast.

“It’s alright Hagrid. I’ll get Professor Snape to look at it. He’ll be able to heal it.” Harry said reassuringly.

“Yeh sure ‘Arry?”

Harry nodded. “I’ll go now in fact. I still have to inform him that Charlie accepted.”

Hagrid looked at Harry uncertainly but smiled never the less. Harry shoved his hand inside his pocket. He walked briskly to Professor Snape’s office. Luckily he did not encounter any others on his journey. Harry knocked hesitantly on Snape’s door. Snape opened it scowling dourly.

His demeanour changed when he saw it was Harry. His eyes softened slightly and he ushered Harry in.

Harry answered the silent question. "Charlie accepted and will be here tomorrow at midnight to pick up Norbert."

Snape nodded and sat down motioning Harry to as well. Harry sat down uneasily.

"What is it?" Snape asked.

Harry blushed slightly embarrassed. "Unfortunately while I was helping Hagrid with Norbert he bit me." Harry peeled off the bandages from his hand. He heard Snape suck in a sharp breath.

"That foolish oaf, what does he think he is doing asking a student to help with a dragon?" Snape snapped.

Snape stood up abruptly. "Come. I have some healing potions in my rooms that will heal it."

Harry followed Snape to a large painting of Salazar Slytherin. "Vita est Malum." Snape whispered.

Harry's eyebrow shot up in surprise. Vita est malum meant life is evil. Harry stepped into Snape's common room. It had a cozy feeling around. The room was decorated in green, black and cream.

"Sit down while I get the potions."

Harry sat on a comfortable black armchair in front of the fire. He saw that the walls had many bookshelves and books on them. Harry could see a few Dark Arts or borderline Dark Arts books on the shelves. They intrigued him, as he could never get any. Perhaps he could sneak into the restricted section and see if they had any Dark Arts books. Harry knew some books in the restricted section were nasty and borderline Dark Arts. But he wasn't sure if there were any actual Dark Arts books there.

Snape came back in with 2 potions and a salve. He handed two of them to Harry.

“Drink the dark blue one first. It’s to heal the skin so it won’t scar. The light blue one is a pain reliever. This pale yellow salve,” Snape lifted the container in his hand. “Is to heal it and stop any infections.”

Harry drank the potions obediently. Snape waited a few moments to allow the potions to work before applying the salve gently to the large bite. The skin instantly started mending together. After the skin mended the faint lines began disappearing. A few minutes later no mark on Harry’s hand indicated a dragon had bitten him. His hand was simply slightly red.

“Thank you Professor.” Harry thought back to when he heard his ex-godfather complaining about Severus Snape. He had always wondered why they hated Snape so much. Once he had asked but James had backhanded him and called him stupid. Harry had been 9 at the time and understood when to not overstep his boundaries. He had returned to his room and squashed his curiosity. Unfortunately it was returning at the moment.

Snape saw the curiousness in Harry’s eyes. “Is there something you needed to ask?” He asked blankly with no malice intended.

Harry swallowed slightly. “When I was living with my former parents Mr. Black came over a couple of times. A lot of the time I heard him insulting you sir. I asked once why they did so but I received no answer and was dismissed. I was wondering if you would tell me why they seemed to hate you so much. I know it isn’t only because you were a Slytherin sir. Others were Slytherins as well but they were never insulted like that.”

Snape sighed heavily. He sat down across Harry and looked at the boy. He could see many of Lily’s features in him. He had her cheekbones, lips, eyes, and general shape of her face. From James he had inherited his messy black hair. His hair had also inherited Lily’s wave instead of the incredibly messy mop that James had. Harry was ready to apologize for asking such a personal question when Snape spoke up.

“We were rivals, enemies, we still are.” Snape’s spoke in monotone. “They insulted me for being in Slytherin, a loner, studious and brilliant at Potions. My achievements were something they turned into insults.

I was and am not a very social person. James Potter, Sirius Black, Remus Lupin and Peter Pettigrew were a group called the Marauders as you probably know. Well Potter and Black saw fit to insult me and I fired back. It turned into so much more and we became enemies always fighting throughout school. We hexed each other in hallways and insulted each other non-stop. Lupin and Pettigrew stood by and did nothing. They neither prevented it nor did they participate. We've hated each other since then."

Harry looked thoughtful for a moment. "You were prepared to hate me at first because he was my biological father."

Snape looked down then back at Harry. "Yes. I was planning to and I am ashamed for that. You are nothing like him and when they disowned you I saw that. However when they beat you I was surprised. Have they done that before?" Snape asked seriously.

Harry lowered his eyes refusing to meet his Professor's. "Why should it matter now Professor. I am no longer part of their family."

"If they have done so in the past it still matters. You still had to go through such disgraceful proceedings if they abused you." Snape snapped.

Harry looked at Snape defiantly. "So what? It's in the past. They can't do anything now."

Snape frowned but let it go for now.

"Will that be all sir?" Harry asked blankly.

Snape nodded. "Good Night Harry."

Harry stood. "Good Night Professor Snape."

Harry stood behind Hagrid's hut waiting for Professor Snape to show up. Next to him was a large crate as big as himself. He waited patiently. After 10 minutes Professor Snape walked up next to him. Silently he cast an invisibility charm on the crate and Harry. Harry cast a silencing charm on himself as well. Snape nodded to where Harry stood.

“Wingardium Leviosa.” He murmured. The invisible crate lifted from the ground and trailed behind Snape. Harry and Snape walked quickly up the Astronomy tower. It was fast approaching midnight. At the top of the tower Snape undid the silencing charm and invisibility charm on Harry and the crate. They stood waiting and sure enough 5 minutes later 4 people on broomsticks could be seen flying towards them. They swooped down and landed on the tower gracefully.

Charlie saw Harry and grinned. “Hiya Harry!” He turned back to his friends. “You lot put the crate onto the carrier.”

Charlie turned back to Harry and smiled pleasantly. Harry shook his hand. “Thank you for coming. A school is no place for a dragon.”

Charlie grinned. “Think nothing of it Harry. In fact in the summer you can even come to visit him.”

Harry smirked. “Hagrid will like that. His name is Norbert by the way. I forgot whether I mentioned it in the letter or not.”

“Well Norbert will be fine. In fact I think the older dragons may even baby him.” Charlie finally noticed Professor Snape there.

“Hello Professor Snape. How’s teaching?” Charlie asked cheekily.

Harry bit his cheek to contain his laughter. Charlie’s friends came forward to meet Harry and Snape as well.

Snape glared. “Still as insolent as ever Weasley.”

Charlie simply grinned in response. “So Harry allow me to introduce my comrades. This is Tyler, Abigail, and Lucas, or simply Ty, Abby, and Luc.”

Ty was a tall brunette with a pointed face and sharp amber eyes. He wore a dark blue robe, which was slightly tattered at the hem. Abby was a short pretty woman with a slim figure and golden hair. Her eyes were a vibrant cerulean. She wore a tank top and light blue jeans. Luc was the same height as Charlie. He was dressed in black, his hair was black and his eyes were black. He smiled mysteriously at

Harry who was intrigued. Charlie stood in front of them with his hazel eyes, red hair, freckles and a blue t-shirt and dark blue jeans.

They seemed an **interesting** lot to Harry and he was **interested** in meeting them again. If he could visit them somehow in the summer then he would he decided.

“Well we have to be off. It was good meeting you Harry.” Lucas spoke.

Harry smiled and waved goodbye as they mounted their brooms and took off.

“They were an interesting lot.” Harry said absentmindedly.

Snape smirked. “You’re planning to visit them if you can.” It wasn’t a question.

Harry nodded. “I don’t know how though. I have no money, no place to stay, nothing really.”

Snape frowned slightly. “You could ask Draco, Blaise or Theodore. They have wealthy families and their parents would not object seeing as you are not longer a member of the Potter family.”

Harry looked at Professor Snape. “I hope so. I don’t want to end up going to an orphanage.”

Snape looked down at Harry. “If none of your friends can offer you a place to stay you will go with me to Snape manor.”

Harry’s eyes widened. “Will you really allow me to?”

Snape nodded sharply. “No Slytherin is going to the orphanage if I can help it. We stick together unlike the other houses.”

Harry smiled gratefully at his Professor. “Thank you Professor.”

Snape gave him the barest of smiles. “Let’s get you back to the Slytherin common room. It’s late and you will undeniably need your sleep.”

Chapter 8

Confrontations with Quirrell

When Harry woke the next morning his friends had already left. He forced down what little hurt he felt and opted to dress. Soon he had dressed and made it down to breakfast. It was almost ending and Harry once again saw none of his friends. Feeling slightly dejected Harry made his way to the library. The raven-haired boy had yet to search for books on dream manipulation.

Not many students were in the library at the time. Harry kept himself in the shadows. He saw his friends sitting at a table with their head bent together. Curious Harry placed silencing charms upon him and sat at a table close to them. He cast an eavesdropping charm and sat back.

“Zabini I won’t tell you again!” Draco snapped irritably.

“But Draco you’re the closest to Harry. Are you sure he doesn’t tell you anything.” Blaise persisted.

Draco narrowed his eyes. Theodore intercepted before a verbal lashing could break out. “Easy Draco. Blaise stop asking, he doesn’t know. Maybe we should follow him. It would certainly make things easier if we knew where he was going.”

Blaise lit up slightly. “We could put those charms we learnt to good use.”

Draco frowned slightly. “Are you sure we should do this. What if Harry catches us?”

Blaise clapped him on the back. “Aw come on Drake, where is your sense of adventure?”

Draco sneered. “We’re Slytherins Zabini. We don’t do adventure. That’s for the Gryffindorks. This plan isn’t even well contemplated. There are so many things that can go wrong with it.”

Blaise scowled. "Do you have any better ideas?"

Draco sighed resignedly. "Fine. But if he catches us I'm blaming you."

Theodore smiled. "Excellent! We'll soon find out what Harry is hiding."

Harry snuck away seething. How dare they? They were supposed to be his friends. Real friends wouldn't try to invade his privacy. He would have to be more careful around them from now on. On the plus side they seemed to have forgotten about Nicolas Flamel. Harry took one look back at them and frowned. Draco, Blaise and Theodore had taken out chocolate frogs as celebration.

Harry's eyes widened dramatically. For a moment he felt like hurting himself. How could he have been so stupid? The answer to Flamel had been right in front of him all this time. His eyes narrowed. His so-called friends could not be trusted with this sudden information. Harry decided to keep it to himself as he had done with the dragon. The green-eyes boy felt hurt that Draco would try to betray his confidence. Harry pushed the thought out of his head.

He had never had friends before and he certainly wouldn't need them now. He had had no idea when he thought of becoming friends with his year mates. After all they were Slytherins. Harry was slightly surprised he did not see this coming.

Harry put all thoughts of Draco, Blaise and Theodore out of his mind. He stepped out of the shadows when he was out of their range of vision. Carefully avoiding other students Harry found 'Hogwarts, A History'. He balanced the heavy book in his lap after seating himself. He flipped through the pages hurriedly and almost grinned when he found the page.

"Nicolas Flamel is the only known maker of the Philosopher's Stone." He muttered eyes wide in awe.

That was what the Cerberus was guarding.

That was what Quirrell was after.

'Fuck me...A philosopher's stone,' Harry thought dazedly.

After replacing the heavy volume, Harry set out to find books of dream manipulation. He was heavily disappointed when he found that there were no books in the library. Harry decided to risk it with Madam Pince. After keeping an eye for other students eavesdropping Harry approached the strict librarian.

“What do you want?” She asked curtly.

“I was wondering if the library had any books on dream manipulation.” Harry asked coldly.

She stared at him from atop her spectacles. “There are three books on Dream Manipulation and Interpretation. They are currently checked out.”

Harry stared back impassively. “May I place a reserve on them?”

Madam Pince glared slightly. “No you may not!” She snapped. “You will have to find them yourself after they have been returned young man.”

Harry refrained himself from glaring at the woman. He nodded sharply and left her to her catalogues.

Harry decided to spend the rest of his day finishing his homework. He had finished rather quickly. Harry unlike his former sister had grown up reading. Although he had read quite a few books, Harry had not practiced all the spells he had read. So far he had only practiced up to fourth year spells and some extras, which had gone to NEWT level.

Charms and Defence were his best subjects. He knew he had no talent in Herbology. It was the only subject he really had to work at. Transfiguration was another strong suit but not nearly as good as Charms or Defence. After years of reading, History of Magic came easily to him, as he already knew the information. Potions, like Transfiguration, was one of his stronger subjects. He would excel at it but not enough to be a master.

Harry had no desire to be a Potions Master. He appreciated Professor Snape’s skill but the art never appealed to him very much. His mind often wandered to Defence magic and Charms. It was one

of the few reasons he had known so many spells so far. His ex-father had had an enormous library full of books on Defence, Charms and Transfiguration. Over the years he had created a small diary of never ending pages to record spells in.

This had been a very useful trick. Lily and James had never allowed him to spend time in the library. The few times where they had forgotten to lock him in his room, Harry had snuck into the library to copy the books out by a spell he had gotten out of his parents' school books. When he had been locked in his room, the sable-haired boy had read the diary.

Harry sighed softly bringing himself out of thoughts of his past. It was over now. He would never be there again. The past haunted him at times. He knew Snape suspected previous abuse. Harry could only hope his potions master would keep the thoughts to himself.

After briefly casting the tempus spell Harry had seen that he had missed dinner. Silently as ever he placed his completed homework into his bag. Once again his schoolwork had been done almost one week ahead of time. Harry hoped his teachers would not assign more. He had other work to do and did not need trivial things like 2 feet on transfiguration theory keeping him.

Harry yawned widely. Drowsily he made his way to his room. Draco had not arrived yet. Harry wasn't sure whether to feel disappointed or overjoyed. On one hand he could not berate Draco for spying on him. On the other hand he was tired and did not feel up to an interrogation.

Harry vaguely remembered crawling into bed before he fell into a fitful slumber. That slumber unfortunately did not last. He jolted awake. Harry sat wondering what could have woken him up so briskly. Sleep was not on Harry's side. An hour and one half later after much rustling and turning Harry decided to get up.

He stretched and threw a robe over his pajamas. Emerald eyes lingered on Draco's sleeping form for a moment before he left the common room. Gray eyes slid open inspecting that the coast was clear. Draco rolled out of bed and threw on his own robe before following Harry discreetly. Harry for his part did not notice the blonde slip out with him.

Harry walked down the corridors aimlessly thinking about nothing. Draco followed silently. His mind was a whirlwind of thoughts. He wondered if Harry was actually going some place or just roaming the halls. Suddenly Harry jerked to a stop. The blond watched as the raven-haired boy slunk into the shadows becoming one with them. Curious, Draco slipped into the shadows as well to watch.

Seconds later Professor Quirrell walked into the corridor. Draco's eyes widened fractionally. His demeanour had changed completely. No longer was there a stuttering, clumsy teacher but a strong, dangerous man. Quirrell unexpectedly stopped.

"Master I cannot shake off Severus. He is insistent that I am up to something."

"Fool. Ignore him and concentrate on your tasssk!" Harry's eyes narrowed in confusion. Who had said that?

"I am trying Master. Forgive me. I will work harder. The Potter brat has no idea what we are doing. She is as ignorant as ever."

"Yesss. Once I have the stone I will once again rissse! They were foolish to think I had been defeated once and for all."

"Yes Master. You shall show them all by killing Jamie Potter." Quirrell spat her name in such ferocious hatred.

"Her brother isss here! Stop him." Voldemort spoke.

"Are you sure master? I do not see the boy." Quirrell spoke in hushed whispers. But in the practically empty corridor his whispers carried across the expanse.

"Yesss. The boy is here." Answered a cool high-pitched wispy voice.

Quirrell whipped out his wand and raised it high in the air. "Lumos!"

Harry stood stock still as light illuminated him. A sigh of relief nearly escaped Draco as he realized the light did not reach far enough to expose him. He watched with baited breath as Quirrell stepped closer to Harry.

“Boy! Why are you here?” Quirrell hissed angrily.

Harry stared at him coldly. “It is of my concern *Professor*.” He said in a mocking tone.

“Audacioussss boy.” Hissed the incorporeal voice. “Seize him.”

Quirrell grabbed Harry’s neck. Harry bit his lip from yelling out. His head felt as if it had been split. White-hot pain ripped through his body scorching his skin. He barely heard Quirrell scream and step back. Quirrell looked at his hand in horror. It looked ghastly. There were blisters and burns covering the limb.

“YOU! You’re sister was not the one that stopped me. It wasss you!” screamed the disembodied voice. “Kill him!”

Harry whipped out his wand but Quirrell had already lunged for him. Draco chose then to step in. He pointed his wand at Quirrell. “Stupefy!”

Quirrell not suspecting the attack fell victim to it. He collapsed to the ground. Harry stared at Draco with wide eyes. Draco walked up to Harry slowly becoming concerned at the other’s lack of speech.

“Harry?” He whispered.

Harry gazed at him unseeingly. “Harry? Are you alright?”

Harry blinked and stared at Draco. Draco could not decipher the emotion in his eyes and decided that they needed to get back to their dorm. “Harry, please say something.”

In a split second Draco was being crushed by a hug from Harry. Draco blinked as the smaller boy hugged him fiercely. Tentatively Draco hugged him back.

“Thanks Draco.” Harry said sheepishly letting go of the blonde. Within milliseconds his cold façade was back up. Draco blinked in shock at the sudden change of emotions. He carefully schooled his own mask into an inexpressive look.

"We should head back to the dormitories." Harry said blandly.

Back in their room Draco had taken to staring at Harry in shock. Harry for his part was rather annoyed at being revealed to Voldemort and Draco's staring.

"You're The Boy-Who-Lived." Draco whispered in awe.

Harry nodded jerkily. "You mustn't tell anyone Draco. Let the world think Jamie is The Girl-Who-Lived. I will be protected not to mention I have free reign over many sources without being hounded and questioned. Please Draco do not tell anyone. They would not believe you anyways but some might look further into it."

"Dumbledore." Draco replied stonily.

Harry nodded affirmative. "Yes. I know your family had been on the dark side previously. I also know your father is only in search of power and the winning side of the war. I can be a powerful ally to the Dark Lord. I don't need the unwanted public attention. Without the world knowing who I am both the Dark Lord and myself will be victorious. Will you keep this information to yourself Draco? I have yet to trust you completely. I heard Blaise and Theodore along with yourself talking of spying on me."

Draco frowned. "Blaise and Theodore wouldn't know when to follow you. I was planning on telling you tonight anyways. To deter them however I did tell them we had no way of knowing when you'd leave. I did follow you tonight though and I apologize. I was just curious and to be honest a bit worried."

Harry stared at him indifferently. "Since you saved my life and did not tell anyone of the dragon I believe you. It may be a while though before I trust you. I haven't known you for more than a few months."

Draco smiled slightly. "Thanks Harry for believing me."

"Thank you for saving me." Harry whispered.

“Ello ‘Arry! Where are Draco, Blaise an’ Theodore?” Hagrid asked opening his door further to let Harry in.

Harry smirked. “They decided they couldn’t handle another one of our talks on magical creatures.”

Hagrid frowned. “Wha’s wrong wit magical creatures?”

Harry shook his head. “Nothing Hagrid. I adore them. However interesting they are to us they simply do not hold the same fascination for my friends. They couldn’t even begin to think of why they would ever want one as a pet. Well, unless it’s small and harmless.”

“Well tha’s alrigh’ ‘Arry. I’ve had a few fair share of pets meself though.” Hagrid bustled around pouring tea for Harry and himself. They settled down at the large wooden table and began to discuss Hagrid’s pets.

“Of course Fang here ain’t dangerous. He’s a ruddy coward. Fluffy on the other han’...” he trailed off.

“I noticed.” Harry took a sip of his tea. “He was quite interesting. I wish I could study him further.” Harry said wistfully hoping his plan would work.”

Hagrid looked slightly uncomfortable as he mentioned his idea. “Dumbledore isn’t in the castle today. I reckon we can go visit ol’ Fluffy.”

Harry’s eyes widened in shock. “Are you sure Hagrid? You could get in trouble with Dumbledore!”

“Dumbledore probably won’ mind ta much. You aren’t doin’ any ‘arm by looking at ‘im.”

Harry sighed heavily. “If you say so. But let’s look before Dumbledore comes back. We might not have to tell him then.”

Hagrid beamed. "Alrigh' lets go. We'll take the hidden staircase so nobody sees us."

And so they went. Hagrid looked around the third floor corridor keeping an eye out for any peeping toms. Quickly he opened the heavy wooden door and ushered Harry in. Fluffy laid on top the trap door snoozing deeply. Hagrid practically cooed at the sight. Inwardly Harry cooed as well, the three-headed dog looked adorable slightly drooling and asleep.

"He's beautiful Hagrid." Harry whispered.

Hagrid nodded. "Aye. He's like a large dog. Very playful and loyal. But if ya provoke 'im I reckon he'd take your 'ead off."

They stared at the sleeping Fluffy for sometime. "Let's wake him up." Hagrid declared.

Harry stared at Hagrid in shock. He hoped desperately that Hagrid would be able to control Fluffy because he didn't particularly want to die as dog food. Hagrid lumbered over to the Cerberus and shook him awake. Bleary black eyes opened slowly and Fluffy immediately began growling. In less then a second he was awake and barking like mad. Hagrid stood in front of him.

"Whoa there Fluffy! It's only me an' 'Arry here. He won' do ya no 'arm!"

At seeing his master and owner Fluffy stopped growling and turned very tame. Hagrid grinned at the dog and began stroking his fur. Fluffy barked once or twice pleasantly. Harry watched all this happen dazedly. Finally Hagrid turned to him.

"Come on 'Arry! He won' bite you." Harry timidly stepped closer thinking this was why he did not make Gryffindor.

Harry walked forward slowly till he was in front of Fluffy. Fluffy sniffed him before declaring him safe. Harry smiled genuinely and began petting the gigantic dog.

“He’s calm now but if he starts up again I’ll just play ‘im a bi’ of music.” Hagrid murmured more to himself than Harry.

Harry stared at Hagrid bemusedly. “Music?”

Hagrid’s eyes snapped to Harry. “Huh, oh yeah. He gets irritated at times so I jus’ play ‘im a bit of music an’ he falls straight asleep!”

Harry stared at the dog thoughtfully. “Interesting. I hope he has good taste. I don’t think I could stand listening to something like country.”

Hagrid laughed heartily. “Nah. Fluffy ‘ere likes classical.”

Harry snorted softly. “Amazing. He’s like an overgrown pet dog. I suppose he’s pretty loyal as well. Cerberians were known to guard the gates of the underworld.”

Hagrid smiled at Harry. “Right you are. Fluffy is very loyal to me and now you. Dumbledore hasn’t met Fluffy properly so Fluffy isn’t too sure ‘bout ‘im yet.”

Harry raised an eyebrow. This could be very useful. He smiled when Fluffy nuzzled his hand begging to be petted again. Once again he began stroking the silky fur. Hagrid and Harry stayed there for roughly an hour before Harry declared they should leave before someone realised they were there. Hagrid pet Fluffy goodbye and led Harry out to the entrance hall via secret staircase.

“I’ll be seeing’ you ‘Arry. Take care.” Hagrid nodded to Harry and walked off to his hut. Harry for his part stood staring at the groundskeeper with a newfound respect. He was very loyal and brave. His knowledge of magical creatures would also come in handy. Harry thought contemplatively.

:Dream:

“Harry Potter. You cannot escape me.” Red eyes clouded his vision.

"I have been a mere spirit for 10 years Harry Potter. I want that stone. If you shall help me I will reward you greatly. We could be allies you know. I could give you everything you've ever wanted."

Harry glared slightly. "First of all I am not a Potter. Second, you have tried to kill me once before. What is to say you won't once you've risen? I'm terribly sorry but I cannot condone this Voldemort. I will stop you. But make no mistake. I won't stop you for the sake of the wizarding world but entirely for myself. This is all to do with my best interests."

Voldemort hissed rancorously. "I was surprised when you were sorted into Slytherin young Harry. Your intentions are most admirable. I will kill you if you stand in my way Harry. You could be great by my side not as a servant but as a partner."

Harry smiled maliciously. "I have no doubt you will try to. As I've said once before. I cannot. For once Dumbledore will know and I shall have nowhere to go. Perhaps if you rise again I will reconsider the offer."

Voldemort laughed mirthlessly. "Clever boy. Very well. I presume you are against Dumbledore. I can sense the darkness radiating off of you child. I will give you one piece of advice because I think you can be great. Never look into Dumbledore's eyes nor stay in his presence if you are alone. The old man is skilled at legillimency and has many other ways to extract information from you."

A burst of pain shot through his forehead.

:End Dream:

Harry shot out of bed. He bit his lip to stop the pain filled scream nearly bursting from his mouth. He sat on his bed panting heavily trying to dispel the pain in his head. Again he drank from one of his vials. He noted that only two were left. Harry lay back down and sighed. He would have to make more soon unless the dreams stopped. He doubted they would but he couldn't help showing the tiniest ounce of optimism.

A/N:

Thank you Martin and Lyon for beta-ing and proofreading this!

CHARACTER IMAGES

James: James has hazel eyes, tanned skin and messy black hair. He is 6'2 and bespectacled.

Lily: Lily has bright green eyes, pale skin and wavy red hair that reaches her mid-back. She is curvy and 5'8 in height.

Jamie: Jamie has hazel eyes, tanned skin and wavy red hair. She is chubby but not overly so. She also has a jagged scar over her heart which created the notion she was the girl-who-lived. She is of average height.

Harry: Harry has bright green eyes, pale skin and wavy black hair. He is thin and does not need glasses. Harry has a lightning shaped scar on his forehead given to him by Lord Voldemort. He is shorter than average height.

Draco: Draco has gray eyes, pale skin and white blonde hair, which is slicked back. He has a pointed face, slim figure and is of average height.

Blaise: Blaise has teal eyes, slightly tanned skin and black hair. He is tall and willowy.

Theodore: Theodore has brown eyes, rosy skin, and mousy hair. He has a round face and is of average height.

Severus: Severus has black eyes, sallow skin, and black greasy, shoulder-length hair. He is tall and has crooked yellow teeth.

Charlie: Charlie has hazel eyes, tanned skin, and shaggy red hair. He is stocky and 5'10 in height. Charlie's face is heavily freckled and his arms have a few burns.

Lucas: Lucas has black eyes, tanned skin and spiky earlobe length hair. He is 5'10 in height and a lean figure. Lucas is handsome and

wears dark clothes. He prefers to be called Lucas but allows some to call him Luc (pronounced Luke)

Abigail: Abigail has cerulean eyes, tanned skin and golden hair. She is slim, pretty and short. She is only 5'4 in height. Her friends often call Abigail Abby.

Tyler: Tyler has sharp amber eyes, tanned skin and dark brown hair. He has a pointed face, muscular figure and is tall. Tyler who is often called Ty is of 6'1 in height.

All Other Characters Will look the same as J.K's description of them.

Chapter 9

Unicorn Blood

Harry nearly smiled when he read the note from his Transfiguration professor. It seemed he had his detention tonight with Hagrid. He knew if his detention was with Hagrid then they might be working with a magical creature. The green-eyed boy knew Hagrid would let him off easy as well. All in all it didn't sound too bad; perhaps he would go as far as to say it sounded enjoyable.

Draco prodded his shoulder indicating he wanted to talk to Harry. The smaller boy nodded minutely. They bid their friends goodbye and left the hall. Once they were secure in their room Draco started talking.

"What's up?" He pointed to the note.

"I've got detention with Hagrid. McGonagall seemed to think I was spreading ridiculous tales to her precious Potter."

Draco sat down in front of the raven-haired preteen. "It won't be too bad I suppose if it's with Hagrid."

Harry smirks. "I know. I'm sort of looking forward to it. Hopefully he might show me a creature."

Draco shook his head. "I don't know what you see in them. I find most of them dangerous."

"Are you admitting you're afraid of magical creatures?" Harry smiled teasingly.

Draco scoffed. "Of course not, I'm admitting that I'd rather stay away from man-eating beasts because I want to live."

Harry chuckled lightly, "Whatever you say." Harry sighed slightly.

"Draco?"

"Yes?" The blond raised an eyebrow.

“Professor Snape offered to let me stay with him over the summer holidays.”

Draco smiled lightly. “Why shouldn’t he? I heard from some of the older students that if one of them has no place to go during the summer Professor Snape takes them in. Slytherins stick together no matter what the other houses say. Besides it wouldn’t do to have a Slytherin go to an orphanage.”

Harry smiled back. “Does he always take an interest in the Slytherins’ personal lives?”

Draco nodded. “If a Slytherin has a problem they usually go to him. A lot of Slytherins do come from Death Eater families. As you can expect their parents sometimes are anything but lovely. A few Slytherins do have abused pasts so they seek help from Professor Snape. He takes care of them and heals them as well. Madam Pomfrey would tell Dumbledore if she saw some of the injuries kids come back with.”

Draco grimaced slightly. “Most families don’t go as far as abuse but there is always the occasional student that has an abusive past. The professor makes it easier for them because often we all are secretive with out pasts. I would be too if my parents abused me. But I’m one of the lucky ones. My father and mother put on public displays that they are cold and indifferent towards me but they do love me. My mother is quite the opposite of what people think of her. If they actually knew her they would go into shock I suppose.”

Harry chuckled. “I suppose she calls you Drakie or her baby dragon.”

Draco pouted but Harry saw a faint tint appearing on his cheeks. He stifled a snigger and looked away from Draco.

Draco tugged Harry’s earlobe to gain attention. Harry looked at him quizzically. “Let’s finish our homework, we only have Potions. That way we’ll have tomorrow free.”

Harry smiled slightly and nodded. The two worked amicably on their homework laughing and joking throughout the time. Harry admitted to himself that he had never laughed so much in his life. His brain told

him to be careful around Draco, that the blond could use him. But his heart said different. It spoke in volumes if the warm happy feeling inside him was anything to go by.

It pleased him that he could be slightly normal and have a friend with who he could laugh and joke. It made him feel his age. Tom was like Draco in a way. Both made him feel pleasant but Tom understood his darkness. Draco on the other hand understood that he needed to feel carefree. For the first time in his life Harry felt like he belonged, like he was wanted.

Speaking of wanted, Harry noted that it was almost an hour to his detention. He decided to go early. He could meet with Hagrid. It would be all the better if Hagrid had brought a creature of sorts with him. He bid Draco goodbye and left walking at a much calmer pace than usual. Hagrid was in his hut tending to Fang when Harry arrived.

"Hello Hagrid." Harry smiled slightly and pet Fang.

"'Ello 'Arry. Jus' tendin' to Fang. I reckon he's got a cold. Nothin' a bit of warm soup can' fix." Hagrid grinned jovially.

Harry sat across Hagrid. "What are you planning to have me do for detention?"

Hagrid didn't speak for a moment. He placed a warm bowl of broth in front of Fang then looked up at Harry still grinning. "We'll be goin' inter the forest."

Harry eyes widened fractionally. "Are you going to show me some creatures?" Had he had no self-control, he would have been bouncing in his seat.

"Aye. I'm takin' you ter meet the centaurs first. Then we got to look fer an injured Unicorn. Been seein' Unicorn blood 'round the forest"

Harry refrained from gaping. Inwardly he was horrorstruck. Who on Earth would injure a Unicorn? They were such pure creatures. Whoever hurt this Unicorn was undeniably evil. "Should we leave now then? This way there will be more time to scout the area."

“Alrigh’ since Fang’s ill we best go now. He can’ sniff out the blood anyways.”

They walked in silence into the forest. Hagrid tromped through the undergrowth easily. All Harry had to do was stick behind him. Harry kept a lookout for any signs of creatures or Unicorn blood, neither appeared throughout the journey. They were quite deep in the forest and the trail had vanished long ago. Hagrid made no signs of discomfort and kept walking. About forty-five minutes into the walk Hagrid stopped in a clearing. He turned to face Harry.

“The centaurs don’ have a known place where they sleep but this ‘ere is neutral groun’. We’ll be seein’ a few of ‘em shortly. Stick close ‘Arry.”

Harry stood next to Hagrid. His face impassive as always, but an underlying of curiosity penetrated his mask. Harry turned his head sharply when he heard hooves galloping. The heavy pounding came closer every second. Two centaurs burst into the clearing and stared blankly at Hagrid.

“Ello Ronan.” Hagrid nodded at the gleaming chestnut-bodied centaur. His hair, beard and tail were a fiery red.

“Bane.” This time Hagrid nodded to the black-haired black-bodied centaur. He was wilder looking than Ronan.

“I trust you are well Hagrid.” Ronan nodded back elegantly.

Bane nodded. “Good evening Hagrid. Who is the young one?”

Hagrid’s eyebrows suddenly jumped up as if he had just remembered Harry was still there.

“This here is ‘Arry Potter.”

Harry nodded politely to both keeping his face devoid of emotion. They nodded back staring intensely at him.

“Destined to defy,” whispered Ronan gloomily. “You have tough times ahead young Potter. In darkness you must triumph. The evil one must

not control you and neither must the chess master. Both will seek your allegiance neither should receive it.” Harry stared wide-eyed at Ronan.

“Young Potter the centaurs are stargazers. We look to the stars for the future. It takes years to acquire the skill and yet none have ever perfected it. The stars guide us in paths of what may come but neither is it fact or fiction. It is possibility. If what the centaurs have seen is true your times ahead are dark and dreary. You will bear much pain and the weight upon your shoulders will increase. Be wise with your decisions. The fate of the world rests with you.”

Harry thanked the gods that Hagrid had been busy talking to Bane to hear what Ronan had said. Had Hagrid heard, his entire plan would have been ruined. No matter how loyal Hagrid was to Harry he would not go against Dumbledore. Had Hagrid heard, he would have told the headmaster posthaste.

Hagrid cleared his throat slightly. “You haven’ seen an injured Unicorn have yeh?”

“An injured Unicorn?” Bane asked.

Ronan chose to look at the stars instead. “Mars is bright tonight.”

Bane threw back his head and stared hard at the stars. “Unusually bright.”

Ronan sighed. “The innocent is no longer with us.”

Hagrid looked impatient. “Yes, yes but have yeh seen the Unicorn?”

The two centaurs continued to stare unblinkingly at the stars. Harry looked up as well and saw that indeed Mars was bright. Harry thought back and remembered he had read somewhere that Mars represented war and destruction. His brow furrowed slightly. The centaurs had turned their knowing gazes on him.

“Mars is the planet of war and destruction. The innocent that fell is the Unicorn?” Harry thought it was correct but centaurs were known for being vague. The connection he had made could be entirely wrong.

Bane looked at him approvingly. Ronan allowed a small smile to flit across his face. Hagrid scratched his head in confusion. Harry refrained from scowling at Hagrid. No matter how loyal and friendly the half-giant was he was still slow and dimwitted most times.

“Hagrid, the Unicorn is dead. We might as well head back. It’s already dark.”

Hagrid frowned. “Tha’s the second one.”

Harry patted Hagrid arm sympathetically. He knew as well it was evil to slay a Unicorn. Inwardly it made him shiver at the monstrosity of it. The centaurs nodded and trotted away from the clearing leaving the first year and the half-giant alone. Suddenly Harry felt afraid of the forest. It was not very fearsome but the lurking shiver that such malevolence resided in the forest made him rethink of coming here with Hagrid once again.

Once again they started heading back to the school. Harry stuck closer to Hagrid on the journey back. His ears and eyes were opened and looking for any potential dangers. Luckily none came for the time being. Fifteen minutes in their walk Harry saw a faint light emerging from the depths of the forest. He whispered for Hagrid to wait.

The large man however did not hear for he had stepped on a twig. Hagrid walked on not knowing Harry had wandered off into the forest.

The green-eyed boy walked carefully toeing around twigs and leaves which would make a lot of noise. He walked up the slightly dirt worn path and continued to follow the faint light. What Harry saw next made his heart hammer. The Unicorn in all its beauty lay in the middle of the clearing. It was a sad sight and Harry could feel tears prick his eyes. It looked entirely out of place.

Leaning over the beautiful creature was another of such evil. Harry could hear the slurps as it drank the blood. The pure malice emanating from the creature overwhelmed Harry. Unconsciously Harry sucked in a sharp breath causing the creature to look up. Pain pierced his head like once before. His scar felt as if it was on fire. Faintly he noted that the figure was Quirrell.

Harry staggered back clumsily, as Quirrell came closer. Harry could see silver blood dripping off the pale chin. A hood obscured the rest of his face. Just as Quirrell made to grab him something a figure jumped over him and charged at the creature. Harry in shock and surprise fell back. The pain was diminishing. It took a minute to sort his head out and when he looked the creature had fled and a centaur was standing over him.

"Harry Potter. It is not safe for you here." The centaur was neither Bane nor Ronan. The figure looked younger; he had white-blond hair and palomino body.

Harry stood and dusted himself off. "Thank you for saving me from him."

Wise eyes stared hard into his. The centaur leaned close. "You know of the hidden mystery and its seeker."

Harry nodded curtly not offering the information. "Who are you?" he asked instead.

"Firenze." The centaur looked at the stars. Sharply he turned to Harry. "You must leave the forest."

He knelt down in front of Harry and indicated that he should get on. "It will be quicker this way."

Just then two centaurs burst into the clearing. Bane narrowed his eyes slightly but made no comment.

"You must leave Harry Potter." Ronan whispered. Bane nodded in agreement. Firenze, Ronan and Bane seemed to have a silent conversation before Firenze nodded curtly and flew off. Harry noticed Firenze and Bane had looked mildly irritated at what had transpired.

Harry held on tightly and kept his head bowed. It would do him no good to be whipped by a tree. Once Hogwarts had come into view Firenze let Harry off his back.

"Do you know what Unicorn blood is used for?" Firenze asked unexpectedly.

Harry nodded minutely repressing a shudder at the haunting image of what Quirrell had been doing. "The blood of a Unicorn will keep you alive even if you are at the point of death. But because you have slain something so pure you will live a half-life, a cursed life." Firenze smiled grimly in approval.

"One should never have to witness such sins as you have just now." His voice was light yet Harry could hear the bitterness in it.

Firenze grabbed Harry's chin and leaned close to the boy. His face was inches away as he stared into Harry's eyes.

"The stars have been wrong before. Let us hope they deceive us once again." With that the centaur whisked away further into the forest. Harry shivered slightly and it was not because of the cold.

Harry walked to out of the perimeter of the forest and spotted Hagrid getting ready to enter the forest once again. He ran over to the half-giant.

"Hagrid!" He called out stopping the half-giant in his footsteps.

"Arry! What do you think yer doin' runnin' away like that?" Harry could see Hagrid was angry and worried all the same.

"I saw the Unicorn Hagrid. It's dead." Harry said softly trying desperately to block the flood of images in his mind.

Hagrid sighed heavily. "Alrigh' 'Arry. You best be goin' back to the castle. Go on!"

Harry hummed in agreement and set off for the castle. When he arrived back in his and Draco's room he saw that the blond had fallen asleep already. What was nice though was he had fallen asleep waiting for Harry. Smiling slightly despite his horrible encounter Harry picked up the book splayed across Draco's chest and placed it on the night table. Feeling generous he also placed a blanket over the blond.

Tomorrow was going to be a long day he thought. Hopefully tonight he might dream of Tom.

:Dream:

"Harry!" A slightly hoarse voice gasped.

Harry stared eyes wide at the sight before him. Tom was slumped against his washroom door. In his right hand was a bloodied knife. On his left forearm were two lightly bleeding lines. Harry could see a few scars against the pale flesh. He stared unblinkingly at the bleeding appendage.

Harry mutely took the knife and cleaned it off. He placed it on the counter by the sink and bent down to sit next to Tom. He could see pain, regret and sorrow reflected in Tom's blue eyes.

"Why are you doing this?" Harry asked blankly staring intensely at Tom.

"I like pain." He whispered ashamedly.

Harry let out a bark of laughter. "You are a fool Tom. A complete and utter fool."

They sat next to each other companionably thinking their own thoughts. Harry abruptly cuffed Tom. The blue-eyed boy glared slightly.

"So what happens when you cut a vein?" Harry asked curiously.

"I die."

"Do you want to die?"

"Sometimes."

"Then how will you be special?"

"People will know my name if I die. The headmaster would tell them."

"But people would forget."

Tom sighed. "That is the problem."

"So why continue Tom? If you die how will you become the most powerful wizard in the world? How will you get the wizarding world to fear you?"

"Don't you think I know that Harry!" He snapped.

"Of course I do."

"Then why tell me this?"

"Because you needed a reminder." Harry whispered dazedly.

Tom pulled out his wand and healed his cuts. "Thanks."

Harry glanced at him from the corner of his eye. "How long this time? I couldn't find any books. They were all taken out. "

"Bugger." Tom said blandly twirling his wand. "Eight months. You're lucky I have a good memory. I was surprised you came actually. I thought that your dreams might have stopped." Harry took the time to look at Tom properly. He had grown slightly and was taller. His hair had lengthened as well.

"Long. So what have you been up to?" Harry blinked. "Well except mutilating yourself."

Tom sniggered. "You just had to put it that way."

"I wouldn't be me if I didn't. It sounds far better and much more original than saying self-harm."

Tom raised an eyebrow. "You can be really odd at times Harry."

Harry snorted softly. "Look who's talking."

Tom grinned slightly. "Are there any other words you prefer saying rather than the obvious and commonly used one?"

Harry leaned back against the wall and thought. His eyes brightened slightly and he smirked. "Well I prefer saying non-consensual rather than rape."

Tom outright laughed at that.

Harry inwardly smiled deviously. He had cheered Tom up without making it obvious.

“So?” Harry prodded.

“I’ve been reading like a maniac.” Tom said tilting his head slightly. “There’s so much information I need to know. The sooner I know the better.”

Harry smirked slightly. “Knowledge is power.”

“I’ve read a lot over the years. I had nothing else to do really. James and Lily didn’t give a shit whether or not I read or not. I kept it secret though. They never knew I had read their schoolbooks. I’ve been reading since I’ve got to Hogwarts as well. Events have come up but I always find time to read.”

Tom quirked an eyebrow. “What kind of events?” His tone was bland but Harry could see he was interested.

“Our keeper of keys and grounds won a Dragon egg and decided that he wanted to raise the Dragon by himself in a wooden hut he lives in.”

Tom’s lips twitched. “Go on.”

“I convinced him that the Dragon couldn’t stay. He told me its name was Norbert.” Harry could see Tom’s lips twitching from the corner of his eye.

“I asked my Potions Professor and head of house for help. He agreed reluctantly and we owed a man in Romania who works at a Dragon community. We took Norbert and sent him off with some blokes from the Dragon community.”

Tom had a small smile on his face by now. “A Dragon? That’s fascinating.”

“Interested in magical creatures are you?”

Tom shook his head. "Not particularly. But Dragon blood is very useful and Dragons themselves are interesting."

"Norbert was beautiful. He was a Norwegian Ridgeback. I was a bit disappointed to see him go. But then again I wouldn't want a growing Dragon living in a wooden hut with one of my friends."

"Yes. I can see where that would be a problem."

They looked at each other and began snickering. Soon it grew to full-blown laughs at the absurdity of it all. Once they had calmed down Harry turned serious.

"Tom, how had Dumbledore been lately? Is he still giving you trouble?"

His face contorted into a scowl. "He's acting as usual. Just watching every so often when I'm in his class."

Harry's lips thinned slightly. "Act disinterested. He'll leave you alone after a while. I noticed in my time Dumbledore doesn't keep a watch over the Slytherins."

"He doesn't usually watch Slytherins. Only me." Tom's said bitterly.

"I don't like Dumbledore any more than you do. But like I said you can only wait."

"Doesn't mean I have to like it."

"You can't always like what you have to do. Life is just like that."

"I've often wondered about that. My mother, she died shortly after giving birth to me. Life supposedly hates me. Everything just falls apart. Even Hogwarts I suppose. I was excited when I came but here I am. Loner and prey."

"Perhaps in the long run it will be better," Tom sighed wistfully.

Harry nudged Tom. "What about your father?"

Tom's eyes burned with anger. "He abandoned my mother because she was a witch. It took me a while to find out but I eventually did. He's still alive somewhere. Did you know I'm named after him? Tom Riddle was my father's name. My middle name Marvolo was my grandfather's."

"My parents abandoned me too. Although I got to live with them they were strangers to me. I only knew the house elves there actually. I know my parents in actions but I know next to nothing about their pasts or themselves. Being sorted into Slytherin was a reminder that I was alive. That I was their son. Did you know that the day after my sorting was the first time in 6 years they recognized me as their son. Pathetic really."

Tom smiled grimly. "They know nothing. Harry, we will be powerful. Once they realize that they will come grovelling back to you. I sincerely hope you kill them when you can. I know if I get the chance to murder my father I will."

Harry smirked. "I don't know if I would kill them. They may be of some use alive and only for that reason will I not plot their demise."

"Thinking like a Slytherin." Tom murmured.

Harry simply stared at him. "I can't control the timing of my visits."

Tom looked at him in surprise at the sudden change of subject. "I know you can't."

"It sucks. I hope next time it won't be as long as eight months. It might be even longer."

Tom pursed his lips. "We'll just have to make the best of it then. We can only hope you come back earlier than this time."

"I'm fading." Harry said, sadness creeping in his voice.

Tom threw his arms around Harry and hugged him just before he faded.

"Bye Harry." Tom whispered as Harry vanished completely.

:End Dream:

Chapter 10

Kick in the Arse

Harry had spent the morning in the library reading heavily. The books he had chosen were slightly advanced and confused him a little. Eventually after he had read through the theory it started to make sense to him. He had wanted to spend the day with Draco doing something fun. Unluckily McGonagall had given Draco a detention for fighting. Harry was somewhat glad that Weasley had been given a detention as well.

Weasley had intentionally pushed Draco into a wall. In which Draco retaliated. Soon there had been curses flying around. Draco's curses were partially effective while Weasley's vaporized into sparks before hitting their intended target. Not that it would have mattered Harry thought disgustedly. Their spells had been horribly off target. Harry thought that Draco would have done better had he not been lost in the disarray of sparks.

Some might say that Harry was being unfair to Weasley. That perhaps if the sparks weren't so out of order then Weasley might have been a better shot. Well Harry had legitimate reasons towards his biasness. Seeing as Weasley had been given a few good shots and had missed them by a mile. Draco had gotten in a few hexes when the sparks had been limited.

He had been very smug when carrot-top had been lead to the hospital wing to take care of a Furnunculus hex. Draco had received a nasty bruise when Weasley had punched him. It was an attempt to hurt the other boy when his wand failed to do so. Before Weasley could injure Draco too bad McGonagall showed up. She had given both detention and taken 10 points for fighting. Luckily she had not seen Harry from his place in a near by alcove.

He had stepped back into it when he heard footsteps approaching. It wouldn't be good to be caught in a fight, especially if it was McGonagall. His common sense had saved him from detention and point deduction.

So here was Harry, sitting all by himself reading slightly advanced texts, all because Draco had been given detention. It was also the reason why he was suddenly trapped in the library with none other than Jamie Potter. Bane of his existence, snot nose brat and an overfed selfish bitch in general. Harry smirked as he thought of many not so nice names that fit Jamie's description.

He sighed dramatically to himself. If only he could change her appearance to a one eyed, one horned purple people eater. The gods were against him today. Jamie had seen him and decided to make a redundant appearance. Harry saw Granger walking off into the opposite direction. He watched the pudgy redhead stalk towards him. His face remained impassive while he pondered inwardly.

It was surprising that Jamie had told her minion to head off. Harry turned back to his book just as the girl finally stood in front of him. She tapped her foot annoyingly waiting to be acknowledged. Harry took pity on her and decided to humor her. He leaned back in his chair and crossed his arms. The Slytherin tilted his head upwards to stare into the face of his ex-sister.

"What's the matter Harry? Did your slimy snakes desert you when they realized what a freak you are?" Her voice was bitter and scathing. Harry had heard this tone many times from his former family. It did not bother him as it used to. They weren't his family anymore. They never were.

Harry arched an eyebrow. "What's the matter Jamie? Daddy can't afford entertainment? Or perhaps you've decided that to boost your self-esteem. You thought you could storm up to me and insult me. Did you honestly think I would take it? Go back to your tower; my words of intellect will surely confuse you." Harry turned back to his book.

When Jamie made no move to leave Harry looked up once again. "Dear pudgy that was simple English. Surely you understood what I meant. I suggest you carry a dictionary should you find yourself lost when others speak."

Where a rounded tan face was once was now a giant puce colored disfigurement. Well that was what Harry's thoughts were. Jamie's

face was scrunched up and resembled a pug. She made Pansy look beautiful at that moment. Her lips were pursed tightly and all the color from them had disappeared. Harry wondered whether she could breathe with her lips so tightly sealed together.

His thoughts were interrupted when the girl stomped her foot childishly. Harry stared at her in barely concealed disdain. He always knew that behind the body of an 11 year old there was the brain of a mere toddler. A petty, selfish, bratty toddler, but a toddler no less. The sable-haired boy smirked inwardly. Had someone read his mind recently they would think he was insulting the girl. But Harry being logical knew that there were no insults, just simple truths.

Harry sighed softly and decided that it wouldn't look good if the girl-who-lived passed out from lack of oxygen right in front of him.

"Be careful ex-sister, you might pop a vein." Harry said wistfully schooling his features into a dreamy look.

Then that horrible mouth opened. Harry braced himself. "Surely enough" The girl screeched. Harry turned a deaf ear to the mindless incoherent rambles the Gryffindor omitted. When she finished Harry turned to her face calm.

"Are you quite finished you spoiled, selfish, snotty brat? Take your tantrum and shove it up you're ..." Madam Pince shushed him and glared at the two.

"You have no right to talk to me like that! You had better start acting nice to me or I'll tell mummy. Mummy will tell Daddy and Daddy will make your life hell." Her voice was screechy and whiny.

"Mummy and Daddy should have stopped procreating after they had me." Harry snapped. "Had you been the child of someone else they would have done as the Vietnamese long ago and dropped you off a cliff."

Angry tears and red splotches covered the face of the girl-who-lived. She raised her hand and slapped Harry hard.

“Take that back, I’m the chosen one! The girl-who-lived! Everyone wants me. My family loves me and so does everyone else! You are a freak. No one wants you and no one loves you. Your family kicked you out. Your so-called friends ditched you. Who else is there Harry? No one wants an anybody. No one wants a freak. You’ll be alone forever Harry. If you died no one would notice. You would have no funeral and no one would shed a tear for you. You’re a horrid boy and you’ll get what you deserve some day. I hope that day comes sooner rather than later. You deserve death and worse!”

Harry stood up sharply and glared at Jamie.

“You think you’re the hope of the wizarding world? Have you faced Voldemort yet Potter? What do you know of power or want? You who think so highly of yourself you have **nothing** to account for the praise you ask of. When you face Voldemort and defeat him only then will you deserve any praise. Tell me dear sister when he rises again what will you do? Who will you chose that would die in your place? Who are you to choose who should die and who should live? What will you do when the media turns the wizarding world against you when you cannot defeat him? What special power do you have?

“When your parents die who will take care of you? I know they will die. I know you will die. You are no one’s hope. You are a disaster! Let the world place their hope on your shoulders. Take the praise you do not deserve. Act arrogant. When the time comes and there is green light coming towards you. Then and only then will you see the truth. You are **nothing** bitch! You cannot answer my questions and you cannot fulfill your so-called destiny! And then when you die, when your life is sucked from you I will stand over you. Do you know what I will do then sister? I will laugh and cry. I will laugh because you knocked on death’s door. And I will cry. I will cry knowing that I am a monster. But I will know I have a life that I survived! I will know that despite my sins I have a future.” Harry spat at her feet.

Jamie was sobbing heavily now and her eyes shone with pure hatred. Harry nearly stepped back at the amount of hatred in her eyes. But he didn’t, he stood his ground and glared at the girl. No tears fell from his eyes. They had dried long ago and he doubted they would ever appear again.

When Jamie saw that Harry held no remorse for his crude words she ran out of the library. Harry sighed. His words were needed but his instinct told him that he had just made a big mistake. No matter how much she deserved the words he should have kept his anger at bay. The red haired brat would no doubt run to tell her mummy. Mummy in turn would tell Daddy. And Daddy would in fact make his life a living hell.

Harry was not stupid when it concerned the Potters. He knew that despite their rudeness towards some the family was held in high regards. James had many important contacts that could later make his life difficult. James would not need any persistence from Lily to do something. Harry had just insulted his daughter. James would make sure Harry would pay for it. The green-eyed boy felt extremely stupid. His previous actions were so Gryffindor like. He deeply regretted saying what he had said.

It was not that the words were too cruel. But the fact that his little speech could come back to hurt him far more than words ever could. His anger had won control and for that Harry knew he needed more practice at restraining his emotions. Draco and Tom would berate him for this. That much he knew.

James saw red. His daughter had written to him. Normally he would have been overjoyed at the thought. But the contents of the letter had caused his enragement. The parchment had been stained with tears and snot. It had been three pages long and had a very detailed version of Harry's speech on it. James threw the parchment into the fire after reading it.

How could that idiotic boy say such things? He knew that the boy had been jealous of Jamie but to be so rude. His daughter didn't deserve that. James sat down and thought hard about what he could do. He would get revenge on Harry. Make no doubt about that, but he had no idea how.

After hours of contemplation James came to an idea. The auror jumped from his seat and grinned crookedly. Seconds later his grin faltered. He glared into the fire. Damn! The letter would have been excellent evidence the boy needed discipline. No matter. The minister would listen to him. James smirked. The whelp would be sorry he had ever been born.

With determination James flooded outside the minister's office. He smiled winningly at the secretary.

"I would like to see Minister Fudge. Please tell him it's urgent."

The secretary swooned slightly at the handsome man's smile. She smiled brightly and nodded. The short lady disappeared into the minister's office. Within moments she appeared again and indicated he should go in. James grinned at her once again and entered the minister's office.

"Good Afternoon Minister Fudge." James said seriously.

Fudge grinned at him. "James Potter! What can I do for you today? Perhaps we should schedule an interview with little Jamie for the Daily Prophet soon. It's been almost four months since she last gave one. I'm positive the public wants to know how Hogwarts is going for her."

James smirked. "Hogwarts is exceptional she says. There is however a problem."

"A problem?" Fudge asked concerned. It wouldn't do to have the Potters displeased.

"My former son, Harry. He's been causing problems for her. Starting fights, provoking her, many derogatory comments have been spoken or so Jamie tells me. Just yesterday she sent me a letter with tears all over it. It seems he claims she is a fraud and she will die at the hand of you-know-who."

Fudge's eyes widened comically. "We can't have this ... this little whelp saying things like that!"

“Exactly what I thought Minister. I have a plan to set him straight. Perhaps you could work out a few favors being minister and all.”

Fudge smirked wickedly. “Of course Mr. Potter. Let’s retire to a more comfortable setting. I dare say this plan of yours will be brilliant as usual.”

James smiled maliciously as he walked with the minister. That brat would pay and his little princess would be happy again.

“Harry?” Draco stared concernedly at Harry when he saw the dark and regretful look on his face. Something was wrong with Harry. The sable-haired boy hardly ever had his eyes so unguarded.

Harry looked up and lay down next to Draco. “Hey Draco.”

“What’s wrong?”

Harry glanced at Draco sharply. “What makes you think something is wrong?”

The blond rolled his eyes. “You’re usually more closed off. The fact I could tell something was wrong is more than enough reason that something is.”

“Shit.” Came the unintelligent reply. Draco smirked clearly amused.

He sobered almost immediately though. “So tell me how did your detention with Hagrid go?”

Harry stared at Draco from the corner of his eye. With a heavy sigh he began explaining what had happened. He started from when the two had entered the forest, to the centaur meeting and finally ended with Voldemort and the Unicorn. By the end of his tale there was a dark look upon his face.

Draco propped himself on his elbow to properly look at Harry. He furrowed his brow slightly.

“So you’re telling me that Voldemort is living off of Unicorn blood.” His voice was hushed and contained a hint of disgust and fear.

Harry nodded the dark look increasing. Draco reached out and pulled Harry’s earlobe.

“It’ll be alright Harry. Now...tell me why you were so angry earlier on.”

Harry smirked lightly. “I had a talk with Potter. She insisted on saying some rather rude things so I retaliated. I made her cry though.”

Draco scowled and interrupted. “And that is bad?”

Harry gave him an annoyed look. “Don’t interrupt. Anyways, I bet you she’ll tell James Potter. I know that he will try something. I just don’t know what. Whatever it is will not be pleasant for me.”

A look of comprehension dawned over Draco’s face. “Maybe we should tell Professor Snape. He might be able to find out what Potter Sr. has planned.”

Harry paused for a moment. He thought that the Professor was trustworthy. However with recent events he couldn’t really trust any of the teachers. But something in him told the boy he could trust the brooding man. Harry glanced quickly at Draco who waited for an answer. Making up his mind he nodded.

Draco grinned slightly. “Great. Let’s go.”

Severus opened the door to his private chambers a scowl firmly planted on his face. It softened slightly when he saw Harry and Draco. Wordlessly he beckoned for them to enter. Once they were seated and comfortable with tea Severus questioned them.

“What may I do for you boys?” His voice was deep and smooth. It had a slight hypnotic quality to it Harry noted absently.

Harry looked at Draco who nodded encouragingly. With a deep breath and a slow exhale Harry explained everything that had happened in the forest. Then he explained what had happened with Jamie and recited a few of the lines to the other two. Severus chuckled softly when he heard the quotes of Harry’s speech. The boy was a master at this he thought proudly. The theory that James Potter would know was somewhat disturbing. Severus knew he would get revenge. That was the kind of man Potter Sr. was.

“I will keep a closer eye on Quirrell. I have already informed the headmaster of my suspicions. He insists that Quirrell is to be trusted. I believe that the headmaster is planning something or he is getting senile in his old age. The former seems much more likely. As for Potter, I will look further into the matter.”

“Thank you Professor Snape.” Harry said honestly.

Draco flashed him an I-told-you-so grin. Harry rolled his eyes in the blonde’s direction. Snape watched in amusement. Harry and Draco reminded him much of Lucius and himself. Both had gotten extremely close even though the blond had been two years older than him. He knew Lucius would be pleased with his son’s relationship.

Harry was as much a Potter and he himself was. Not only did the boy have a sharp wit he was also powerful. Lucius too would be reminded of their relationship when he saw the two boys. Draco had already asked him whether it was wise to invite Harry to the manor over Christmas. Severus had been rather content knowing that the boy would not be alone for Christmas.

“Draco?”

“Yes sir?”

Severus smirked. “You’ve known me since you were two years old. Just because I am also your Potions Professor does not mean you need to refer to me as Professor or sir in private.”

Draco smiled slightly. "Sorry Severus. Father said to be respectful."

"I doubt your father meant for you to take it that far." Severus' eyes flashed in slight amusement.

Harry sat watching his Professor and friend talk. He felt left out but it did not bother him as much as it could have.

Severus apparently noticed this. He turned his attention onto Harry. "You may call me Severus as well in private Harry."

Harry smiled slightly. "Okay Severus."

"Do you have any plans for Christmas Harry?" Severus asked hoping Draco would get the hint.

Harry kept his small smile on not betraying any emotion. "No sir."

Draco grinned. "Actually Harry I was going to ask you to come with me to the Manor. Mother and Father have already agreed. They wish to meet you as well."

Harry's smile grew fractionally. "Thank you Draco. It sounds fun."

"Sev, are you coming to the Manor for the usual week during Christmas?"

Severus glared slightly at the nickname. "Must you insist on calling me such infantile nicknames? I will be there 3 days before the 25th and I will leave on the 28th."

Draco chose to ignore the question concerning the nickname. Harry watched in amusement as the blond stood up and walked quickly to the portrait hole. After noticing that Harry had not followed him he backtracked to see two faces staring at him in amusement.

"Are you coming Harry? We should make sure we have our presents ordered and wrapped."

Harry smiled at his friends' amusement. Smiling is more pleasant than I considered Harry thought. He had smiled more in these past

few months than he had in his entire life. He was much to his dismay ecstatic that he had a friend like Draco to cheer him up. Harry bid goodbye to his Potions master and left with an exuberant Draco.

The black-haired boy had felt warmed when his friend had invited him to his home for Christmas. Never before had he been asked to participate in Christmas. The house elves had been his only friends. He would never see them again and that made him a bit gloomier than he would have liked to admit. It was all in the past. This year he would enjoy Christmas. He would push all his pessimistic thoughts away and have fun. Severus would come as well. That was reassuring. Harry couldn't really place the feeling he got when he was near the sallow-skinned Professor. Lately Harry had been stumped towards things such as feeling. He felt idiotic that after all the years he had spent studying he couldn't figure out a simple thing like feelings.

Little did he know feelings were anything but simple.

Chapter 11

Sorry!

“Harry! Draco!” Theodore’s voice carried across the common room before Harry and Draco could leave.

Sighing slightly Harry turned to look at Blaise and Theodore. They walked briskly till they were only a few steps away.

“Could we talk?” Blaise asked looking from Harry to Draco.

Draco nodded. “Let’s go outside.”

The four boys walked out of the common room. The trip outside was spent in silence as each delved in their own thoughts. They continued walking till they reached the grassy perimeter of the lake. Harry sat down on the grass gesturing for the other to do the same. Draco sat next to Harry while Blaise and Theodore sat directly across.

“Speak.” Harry’s eyes stared blankly, betraying no emotion.

Theodore spoke first. “Why have you two been ignoring us?”

Draco prodded Harry’s side. With an eye roll Harry nodded.

“He heard us talking in the library that day.”

Blaise and Theodore paled. “We didn’t mean it in the way you think!” Blaise exclaimed.

Harry raised an eyebrow. “Elaborate.”

“All three of us were worried about you when you disappeared. We weren’t sure whether or not you were disappearing because you wanted to or not. We’re your friends Harry and although we’ve known you for a short time we still care for you.” Blaise broke off with a deep breath having said that in one breath.

Harry looked into both eyes and saw truth. He smiled slightly. "You're forgiven. But...if you ever try to follow me I will personally acquaint you with the hospital wing."

The days went by and the relationship between the four had gotten stronger. Harry had told them about his rant with Jamie. Blaise had laughed hard while Theo sympathized with him. They all knew how vindictive James Potter could be when provoked.

Harry, Draco, Blaise and Theodore had just finished breakfast and were heading outside. Blaise wanted to invoke a snowball fight. Draco sniffed haughtily and called it childish but you could see the mirth in his eyes. Theodore had agreed almost immediately. Harry unfortunately was still not used to having fun and acting his age. He declined immediately and claimed he would watch them.

A trio of gleams sparked up in brown, teal and gray eyes. Harry wouldn't know what hit him. They set off to the far side of the school away from all eyes before the Slytherins would relax. Blaise began the fight almost immediately by throwing a large snowball at Draco. The blond retaliated just as quickly by charming snowballs the size of cannon balls to hit Blaise.

One of them strayed and hit Theodore who joined in the fight. Pretty soon balls, triangles and stars of snow were flying around. Draco maneuvered himself 20 feet behind Harry and hit him with a snowball.

THUNK!

Unfortunately, Draco's snowball was filled with ice. Draco cringed and braced himself for the verbal lashing about to come.

"What the fuck was that?" Harry said coldly rubbing his head.

"A poorly thought out plan to get you to have fun." Blaise supplied weakly.

Harry stared at Blaise wide-eyed for a moment. Then, laughter came bubbling out of his mouth. And soon Harry was on his knees holding

his stomach as he laughed his heart out. Draco grinned and shot another snowball at Harry. Thankfully this one was all snow. Harry dodged it and gathered his own snowball awkwardly before pelting Blaise in the center of his forehead.

The four boys laughed and resumed their snowball fight with vigor. Harry backed up till he was standing next to Draco. The two traded looks and double teamed against Blaise and Theodore. The sun drifted down as the boys played in the snow unaware of a pair of gleaming coal eyes watching them. Those obsidian eyes had filled with concern when Harry was hit with an ice block. That quickly changed into mirth after Blaise's explanation. They filled with warmth and slight happiness when Harry joined the other three boys.

As the sky turned a pink orange color the boys stopped and started to walk back. The black eyes hardened once again before their owner disappeared with a flourish.

Harry sighed. Draco, Blaise and Theodore were in the common room doing their homework and he was alone in his room. He could have stayed with the other three but he needed to be alone for a while. His homework lay in his bag completed and waiting to be handed in during lessons.

With another soft sigh he kneeled by his trunk. Inside he removed an old sock from the bottom of the trunk. The sock was a plain black color slightly faded over time. Harry turned the sock upside down over his bed. Coins jingled and fell from the sock. Setting it aside Harry began counting the money he had. It roughly added up to a little over 10 galleons.

It would be enough Harry thought a bit sadly. Over the years at the Potter residence money was hardly given to him. When he was much younger Lily and James had given him a tiny amount of allowance. As he grew Harry had saved the money up. When he turned six years old all money given to him was stopped. His nana had tried to give him money. But James had confiscated it and given it to Jamie.

He had never needed money before but now he desperately wished he had more money. It was almost Christmas time and he had little money for presents. They would have to be cheaper than he would have liked. His friends all came from high sophisticated **rich** families. The green-eyed boy wasn't sure if his gifts would be appreciated.

Thankfully he did not need to spend any money on Severus' gift. The dragon venom he had taken from Norbert lay safely in the bottom of his trunk. Harry had been planning to sell it for his school supplies money but had decided against it quickly. Dragon venom could be used for many dangerous and illegal potions. He wasn't really against it but the kind of people who made those potions was reason enough. They knew much more magic than him; they wouldn't pay for the venom they would simply take it.

Harry smiled slightly. Three presents were needed, one for Draco, one for Blaise and one for Theodore. Perhaps he could add a few charms to whatever he bought. It might make the present more worthwhile for them. Harry resisted the urge to chew his cheek. What if they didn't like his presents? Harry sighed. He would try hard but with only 10 galleons he would be hard pressed.

Suddenly Harry cursed. Draco would be taking him to Malfoy Manor over Yule. That meant he should get something for the elder Malfoys. He didn't even know the elder Malfoys but it would be rude not to get them something. They had invited him to their home for the winter break after all.

Green eyes darted to the clock. It was only one in the afternoon. Stretching his legs Harry decided he would take a walk. It might help clear his mind enough to think of gifts for the Malfoy family, Blaise and Theodore.

He walked along the perimeter of the common room making sure to keep in the shadows. When no one looked his way he slipped out of the common room. Walking and clearing his mind would work much better if his friends weren't there to distract him. Harry's face relaxed from the frown that it was wearing. Whipping out his wand he cast the invisibility and silencing charm on his feet.

Having no idea where he was Harry made to backtrack. A flash of red hair stopped him. Harry walked towards where he had seen the red hair. Turning a corner he saw two twins with fiery red hair pulling out their wands. They were crouched behind a statue of a one-eyed witch. The twin on the right tapped the statue and whispered '*Dissendium*'.

"Old McGonagall will never notice we're gone." The twin on the left whispered.

"Come on George, I want to see if Zonko's has any new products."

The twins dived headfirst into the statue. Harry watched bemusedly. He thought back to the chatter he had heard in the common room. Zonko's...was a joke shop in Hogsmede! Emerald eyes widened in disbelief. He had been out for a walk and instead found a secret passage to Hogsmede. With a wicked grin he walked forward whipping his own wand out. It had been almost 30 minutes since the Weasley twins had gone. They surely would have left the tunnel by now. Harry tapped the one-eyed witch with his wand.

"*Dissendium*."

The witch's hump opened. With a deep breath Harry propelled himself forward thankful he had brought his money with him. The slide stopped abruptly pitching Harry into darkness.

Harry felt dirt underneath his hands as he pushed himself up. The tunnel was large enough for him to stand. Taking a slow breath Harry started walking. After what felt like an hour the dirt beneath his feet began to rise. He sped up slightly and nearly grinned when he saw battered stone steps.

He settled on a small smile instead. Carefully he extended his hands over his head and began to climb the staircase. Soon his hands brushed against stone. After hearing no sounds he pushed the trapdoor up and to the side. Peeking over the edge of the passage he saw no one. Harry pulled himself out of the tunnel and carefully placed the trapdoor over the passage.

His invisibility and silencing spells were still in effect. The Slytherin first year walked out of the shop calmly. He had pulled the hood of his

cloak up just in case his invisibility charm had decided to fade. Harry walked down the road to the far end of Hogsmede. There were a few shops here. He looked at the window of an antique shop. A sudden urge to go in attacked his mind. Harry blinked in shock. Warily the boy walked into the shop.

Allowing his feet to take control they lead him to a glass shelf with beautiful jewelry on it. Harry reached out and picked up a small ebony case. Inside was a pair of earrings. They were made of white gold. Two strips of white gold ribbon encircled diamonds. The length of the cylinder-like shape was two inches. Harry stared at them in awe and ran a finger over one. Warmth enveloped him.

"No one had ever been able to touch those." A wispy voice traveled throughout the shop.

Harry turned around sharply and saw that his invisibility charm had faded.

"How much are these earrings?" Harry asked showing them to the lady.

"You may have them for 3 galleons young man. Like I said no one has been able to touch those. When someone can touch them I try to sell them for cheap. I was cheated when I bought those pieces of junk! They may be authentic but everyone who touches the damn things gets stunned."

Harry blinked in shock, only 3 galleons for these? Harry turned back to the shelf an idea suddenly forming in his mind. His eyes twinkled when he saw a pair of beautifully carved cufflinks. He picked them up as well. Browsing through the jewelry he picked up another box.

"Perfect." He whispered. Inside the box was a silver chain. Attached to it was an onyx dragon. The dragon was simplified and had realistic eyes.

"How much for the cufflinks and the Dragon chain?" His voice was emotionless. This woman was giving him these expensive and beautiful pieces of jewelry for a cheap price. Not to mention that they had obviously been protected against something. These would be

special. Harry could tell they weren't harmful. The warmth that spread through him assured the boy that they were safe.

"I will give you all three of them for 6 galleons." The lady said happily. Obviously she thought she was making a big sale.

Harry handed the 6 galleons over without second thought and left the shop, three ebony boxes tucked in his robes. He placed the invisibility charm over himself once more before venturing down the road.

Once Harry was back in his room safe and sound he set to reading his advanced charms book. He had already read the charms book and seen a few charms he wanted to place on the jewelry. One was a tracking charm, another, the mental voice one which accompanied it, and finally the untouchable one.

The tracking charm would allow the Malfoys to find each other. The mental voice one would cause the tracking charm to tell them mentally where the other was. This would help in case they were in front of the wrong company. The untouchable one would key each piece of jewelry to its owner. This would only let Harry and the owner take off the jewelry.

Harry had only two weeks to perfect the charms and cast them. He knew that he would probably not have the power yet to perform the mental knowledge one. His mind wasn't matured enough to do it. Green eyes lit up. Severus could help him with that. The other two Harry was sure he could manage by then. Smiling widely he continued to read the book thoroughly practicing wand movements along the way.

When Draco walked into his and Harry's room he saw the boy sleeping with a book on his chest. Smiling lightly the blond put the book on the stand and tucked the smaller boy in. After changing into his own pajamas Draco went to bed as well.

Harry woke up one hour later. For some unknown reason he felt wide-awake. Grumbling slightly he got up. After some searching he couldn't find his book. With a slightly mischievous look in his eyes

Harry set the invisibility and silencing charms on himself once again. He quickly left the dungeons before deciding to wander the corridors. As he turned into a corridor he spotted Severus, Quirrell and Filch up ahead. He sped his walking till he was standing close enough to hear what they were saying.

"It's still hot. That means there's a student out of bed!" Filch growled brandishing a broken lamp.

Severus swirled around to look at Quirrell piercingly. Quirrell stumbled back nearly bumping into Harry. Green eyes widened. Shit. Voldemort could sense him. Not glancing back Harry ran into the first room he saw. He walked deeper into the room scrunching his nose delicately at the dust and dirt.

There were desks and chairs littering the border of the room. Harry guessed this was another unused classroom. A flash of light suddenly caught his attention. First he saw a small window then a mirror. It didn't take a genius to figure out what made the flash. Harry walked closer to the mirror slightly intrigued by its regal design.

Shaking ebony hair out of his eyes Harry gazed into the mirror. He frowned. It was black. There was no reflection or even a mirror left. The surface had turned obsidian.

"What the fuck?" Harry murmured to himself.

He placed a hand on the surface of the mirror tentatively. A sudden feeling of sorrow, pain, loss, regret, and morbid happiness assaulted him. A startled cry erupted past his lips before he could stop it. Harry stumbled back ripping his hand off the mirror. He stared at the inky dark surface in shock. What in Merlin's name was this?

A part of Harry felt like touching the mirror again but a bigger part told him to leave and never come back. The mirror whatever it was had no distinguishing qualities. Whatever it was, it could have been dangerous should he attempt to touch it again. As he reached the door Harry looked back over his shoulder and narrowed his eyes in thought. Shaking his head Harry left not knowing he would return.

One and a half weeks later Harry had mastered the tracking charm and the untouchable charm. He decided to go to Severus for help today. Telling his friends that he needed to ask Severus something he made his escape. Harry stood outside a portrait blank faced waiting for the Potions Master to open the door to his chambers.

Severus opened the door with a sour look. When he saw Harry it immediately changed into an impassive one. His eyes however had warmed. He waved Harry in and shut the portrait. Harry made himself comfortable on an armchair and waited until Severus had seated himself. Severus waved a hand indicating Harry to talk.

"I need you to promise that you won't include school rules or tell Dumbledore."

Severus raised an eyebrow. "Done, continue."

"I was walking in the hallways under invisibility and silencing charms. I saw the Weasley twins crouched behind the one-eyed witch's statue. To make it short, that statue is a secret passage leading to Honeydukes' cellar. I knew where I was going before I went down the passageway. Christmas is coming up and I needed to buy some gifts so I went under the charms. When I was walking down the road I felt this urge to go into a shop. It was a small antique shop.

"There was a glass shelf with this beautiful yet expensive jewelry. I was inspecting it and the owner of the store came up behind me. The invisibility charm had faded so she could see me. She told me that I was the only person who could touch the jewelry so far. When others tried to touch them they stunned them. She told me I could have what I wanted cheap because no one else could touch them.

"I took three of them. I don't have much money so it was a good deal. I know they aren't hexed or dark. They omitted warmth that you feel in protection jewels. Anyways, I wanted to put charms on the stuff. I perfected the tracking charm and the untouchable charm. They have already been placed on the jewelry. I wanted to ask you if you would perform the mental voice charm on them." Harry sat back and watched Severus intently.

Severus blinked owlishly before his features contorted back into his relaxed but impassive face. "You certainly put a lot of thought behind this. I will help you. The Malfoys will appreciate this quite well. Take out the jewelry. If it is protection jewelry then I should be able to touch it as well."

Harry did as he was told. Severus examined the Dragon chain, the earrings and the cufflinks in interest. With a complicated wand movement he performed the charm.

"These are exquisite. I would say the design is late 17th century. Normally these would have been expensive. Since you touched them first you have the real say on who can touch the jewelry. Even if you had not put the untouchable charm on them, others except the Malfoys would not have been able to touch them."

Harry grinned at Severus before putting the trinkets back in his robes. Severus sat back and watched silently as emotions flit across Harry's eyes. With a deep breath Harry looked back up and directly into Severus' eyes.

"Severus, can I tell you something? Harry whispered.

Severus nodded concerned.

"I stumbled across this unused classroom about a week and a half ago. Inside there was a mirror. I don't know what kind of mirror it was but when I stepped in front of it the surface turned black. I was confused at first. Then I touched the surface. Feelings of sadness, regret, pain, sorrow and this morbid happiness ambushed me. I was so scared. I don't know what kind of mirror it was but I can't stop thinking about it." Harry's eyes had traveled down to his hands.

Severus' eyes widened, they turned concerned just as Harry started looking up. Severus knew what the mirror was. He knew what Harry had seen. The sallow-skinned man felt sorrow inwardly when Harry had stated what he had seen.

"Put it from your mind Harry. Some mirrors are terrible. This one is particularly vindictive from what I've heard."

Harry nodded and smiled up at Severus. He stood up and quickly wrapped his arms around Severus before rushing out of the room mask in place. Severus sat in shock. Warmth filled him. His lips curled just barely smiling. As much as he didn't want to admit it Severus was getting very fond of Harry.

Chapter 12

Knockturn Alley

Harry was pondering what to get Blaise and Theodore when Draco came in. He smiled slightly at Harry and plopped down next to him. Harry smiled back and went back to pondering. The blond boy frowned slightly. Pale finger snaked up to the sable-haired boy's ear. Smirking he pulled the lobe. Harry's head snapped up as he glared. Draco stared innocently.

"What is it Draco?" Harry asked sighing.

Draco feigned hurt. "I just wanted to talk to you. If I'm not wanted you should tell me in the first place."

Harry rolled his eyes but grabbed the blond's wrist as he tried to leave. Looking up through his eyelashes Harry pinned Draco with a glare.

"You've disturbed me already, might as well tell me why you want to talk."

Draco sniffed haughtily but sat down. "To be in the presence of a Malfoy is an honor you should be delighted."

They kept their blank faces for a moment before cracking up. Draco crawled onto the bed to sit next to Harry.

"I need to buy a gift for Blaise and Theodore. I was hoping you had some suggestions." Draco lay back on his forearms.

Harry turned to look at Draco. "Unfortunately I have yet to buy their presents. Perhaps we could find our gifts together?"

Draco smirked. "I have some catalogs we could order from." He shifted slightly. "So what should we get them?"

Harry gave Draco a dull look. "Maybe if we could look through the catalogs we would have some idea."

Draco lazily pointed a finger to his bedside table. "They're in there."

The green-eyed boy resisted the temptation to smack Draco upside the head. Rising gracefully from the bed he pulled out the heavy catalog. Frowning slightly he dropped it onto the bed. He only had four galleons for their presents. Hopefully Draco's catalog wouldn't include many expensive items. Draco flipped himself over so he was lying on his front. He pulled the catalog in front of him and looked at Harry expectantly.

Rolling his eyes Harry dutifully lay down next to Draco to see the catalog better. They browsed through the items never noticing how close their bodies were. Finally Harry stopped Draco from turning a page. He looked down and saw a rather handsome quill set for 2 galleons. The set included two quills made of falcon feather and a pot of sapphire ink.

"Don't turn the page; I'm getting them both one of those quill sets." Harry stood up quickly. He bent over his trunk and retrieved a leaf of parchment with a quill. When he resumed his position he saw Draco had turned the page. Emerald eyes narrowed.

WHACK!

"What was that for?" Draco pouted rubbing the back of his head.

"You turned the page." Harry said coldly flipping back to the quill set.

Carefully he wrote out an order form and requested two sets be sent post haste. Sighing inaudibly Harry also added the last four galleons to the roll. He used a sticking charm to attach the pouch containing the galleons to the order form. Draco sulked slightly but waited until Harry was finished.

"You may turn the page." Draco scowled slightly but resumed browsing through the catalog.

Harry put the order form on his own bedside table before lying next to Draco again. They went through the book quickly and saw nothing that would be useful. The gray-eyed boy groaned.

“Now what am I supposed to get them?” He pointedly looked at Harry.

The smaller boy gathered the catalog and put it back in Draco’s bedside drawer. “Perhaps you should get them something practical. Like clothes, candy, books or even games.”

Draco’s eyes lit up. “I can get them animagus books!”

Harry smiled despite himself. “That would be an excellent idea. We could probably start studying about Animagi soon. I doubt we should try to become any until at least third year. Our magical capacity is too uncontrolled for us to start now or even next year. We could end up deformed or covered in scales or fur.”

Draco made a sound of disgust. “What do you think I’ll be?”

Harry studied Draco critically before grinning. “A fox!”

“A fox? I can’t be a Fox! They’re so small and furry” He grumbled staring at Harry in horror.

“I don’t know. They are very sly creatures and what’s wrong with being furry? I think foxes are adorable.”

Draco smiled slyly. “So you think I’m adorable?”

Harry fought down the blush and scowled at the blond. “Perhaps I was wrong about you being a fox. Maybe you’ll be a dog.”

“What?” Draco questioned clearly confused.

Harry smirked; his order form was clutched in his hand as he moved to the door. “I think you’ll end up a dog.”

With that Harry walked out leaving a confused boy. Draco’s grey eyes grew wide in realization. He ran out the door. When he was near Harry he scowled.

“I am not a bastard.” He huffed. “My mother and father were married before I was born.”

Harry chuckled and cuffed the blond lightly. With a sound of protest Draco fixed his hair back into its normal slicked back position.

Harry scrunched his nose slightly. “Why do you slick your hair back all the time?”

“It’s befitting of a Malfoy to be immaculate.” His words were spoken so imperiously that Harry nearly laughed.

The sable-haired boy looked at his companion impassively. “I think your hair would look much better left out.”

Draco simply shrugged. They walked in a companionable silence to the owlery. Harry smiled slightly at Hedwig. Although she was Jamie’s owl she had preferred the quiet dark-haired boy to the loud ginger-haired girl. Harry petted her while Draco gathered a school owl.

The taller boy stepped up next to him with an owl on his arm. Harry smiled slightly in thanks before attaching his order form to the owl’s leg. After a small pat by Draco the owl took off. Harry pet Hedwig again before the two left the owlery.

“Are you excited to be going to Malfoy Manor?” Blaise asked as they walked down the path to the train station.

Harry nodded. He was excited but he was quite nervous as well. Draco assured him many times that his parents would be delighted to have him. His father may not be delighted but he was pleased. He hoped what Draco had told him was true. The blond was his best friend and first friend. It would be troubling should Mr. and Mrs. Malfoy decide that he was not worth their time.

After all what could the elder Malfoys see in him? Harry was not only poor but also an orphan. He had no family, no heritage, no surname,

and no history. At least he was a Slytherin. That might gain some points in their eyes. Maybe the fact he hated the Potters and Dumbledore would help his impression. Knowing and liking Severus wouldn't hurt either.

They waited at the platform until the train arrived. Students clambered on eagerly. Draco led them into a compartment near the back of the train. This was where most of the Slytherins chose to sit. The train was divided into four. The Hufflepuffs sat in the front, then the Gryffindors, Ravenclaws next and finally Slytherins.

The Hufflepuffs sat in the front to stay out of everyone's way. The Gryffindors wanted to put as much space between themselves and the Slytherins so they came next. The Ravenclaws were indifferent towards Slytherins. They were the barrier dividing Slytherin from the Gryffindors and Hufflepuffs.

Currently Harry and Draco sat next to each other across from Blaise and Theodore. The four were talking about becoming Animagus'.

"So we're clear then. The books and knowledge come first. Then we have the practical in third year." Theo asked quietly.

Harry nodded. "Aye. Basically it'll take us one year to study up on the material and develop the right state of mind. It wouldn't seem like we're waiting at all."

"I wonder what animal I'll become." Theo mused.

"I don't know. Maybe it's a cat of some sort?" Blaise leaned back in his seat. "You are fierce, cunning, and you get really silent when people start talking about themselves. What about me?"

"A horse." Harry answered automatically.

"A horse?" Blaise raised a brow.

"They are quite playful, and full of energy. They are vivid and animated. They also keep attention on themselves at times with their humor and appeal."

Draco smirked. "Sounds exactly like you Zabini."

"What's Draco then?" Theo asked.

"I'd wager some sort of cat as well." Blaise spoke up.

Harry nodded. "I agree."

Harry did not ask them what they thought he would be. The green-eyed boy wanted it to be a complete surprise. He prayed that whatever animal he turned into wasn't gigantic. The rest of the train ride passed in amiable talk. At last the train slowed to a stop. Draco and Harry waved goodbye to Blaise and Theo. Harry mentally thanked Professor Snape for placing feather-light charms on their trunks. The two Slytherins easily lifted their trunk before stepping onto the heavily crowded platform.

Draco's gray-eyes scanned over the crowd and locked with another pair of cold gray-eyes. The blond beckoned Harry to follow him. Together they made their way through the throng of people until they stopped in front of Mr. and Mrs. Malfoy. While Harry hung back Draco stepped forward to embrace his mother and peck her cheek. He simply nodded at his father, face impassive, eyes cold. His facial expressions were mirrored on Harry, Lucius and Narcissa's faces. If the two elder Malfoys were surprised of Harry's emotional control they did not show it.

"Grasp the portkey boys. Your carriage awaits you." Drawled the patriarch of the Malfoy family.

Harry stepped forward and placed a finger on the business card. Draco and Mrs. Malfoy copied his actions. In only seconds all four were whisked off to a sparse countryside. The grass was lined in fresh dew suggesting it had rained lightly earlier. Harry kept his mask intact but he could not help but think of the beauty that surrounded him. The onyx-haired boy had always enjoyed the outdoors. Potter manor was quite far from civilization. So, as he grew he had spent most of his time outside in the meadow reading or playing on his own.

Draco caught his eye and gave him a brief smile. Harry's lip curled upward slightly before resuming its impassive gesture. They did not

have to wait long for the carriage. Only a few minutes or so after they arrived, the carriage appeared. Harry had never seen a carriage that looked as beautiful as the Malfoy's. Of course he couldn't really expect anything less than the best from them.

He was really starting to hope they liked his presents. Being poor had never been an issue before, he had always been supported. His clothes and food were taken care of by the house elves. Now that he thought about it, he had no money for school supplies, new clothes or even simple necessities. Perhaps he could get a job over the summer.

Harry turned his thoughts back onto the carriage. The carriage door was opened magically. Lucius waited patiently until Narcissa stepped into the carriage gracefully before getting in himself. Draco walked in next, Harry trailing him not much further behind. They sat silently not speaking. Harry refrained from fidgeting. Having had much experience he knew that fidgeting often upset adults.

Harry's thoughts were cut off when the carriage jerked to a stop. In all Malfoy grace none of the Malfoys moved an inch at the sudden stop. Thankfully Harry had not moved either. Inwardly Harry applauded himself on his performance so far. The Malfoys now knew he was not uncultured nor an overemotional retard.

One by one the Malfoys and Harry stepped out of the carriage. The emerald-eyed boy fought the urge to gape. Not only did the manor's beauty allure people but the intimidating atmosphere around it was enough to ward off thieves or trespassers. Mr. and Mrs. Malfoy led the way up to the Manor gates. From there they placed one hand on each of the boys' shoulders and apparated them inside the manor. The wards only allowed those with Malfoy blood to apparate into the manor. Although sometimes when the patriarch wished to key someone into the wards they would be able to.

Once inside the manor Narcissa dropped her mask and beamed. She threw her slender arms around Draco and squeezed him tightly. Harry fought the urge to smirk at Draco's disgruntled expression. He saw the warmth enter his friends' eyes and felt a pang of jealousy. The ebony-haired boy wished he had someone who loved him like a

son but it was not meant to be. Contrary to his jealousy Harry felt happy for his best friend.

“Oh Draco I’ve missed your presence around the manor! Come you and your friend must tell me all about your adventures at Hogwarts.” Narcissa smiled warmly at Harry.

Harry allowed a small smile to flit across his face. He was too unused to smiling in front of strangers to do so easily. The Potters had never paraded him around and forced him to act like a happy child. No, they chose the easier way and locked him up before the guests came over. He had overheard Remus Lupin inquiring about the green-eyed boy’s absence quite a few times. The Potters had always told him Harry was shy and did not want to come down. After Harry’s ninth birthday Remus stopped asking. He was always given the same response when he asked.

Harry had felt warmed that someone did notice him. But unfortunately Remus too forgot all about Harry. The black-haired boy saw a small frown cross Narcissa’s face but in seconds it was replaced by her smile once again. She stepped back and allowed Lucius to greet his son.

Lucius smile slightly at his son. “Welcome home Draco. It has indeed been quite an experience without your usual mischievous tricks being played on the staff.”

A slight pink tint rose over Draco’s neck. Harry bit his cheeks to stop his smirk. If this kept up he would have enough blackmail on Draco to make the Malfoy heir his personal slave. Not that he would do such things...to Draco. But it was still fun to know.

Lucius turned his attention onto Harry. “Draco has told me much about you Harry. The Potters from what I can see will be devastated to know they let you slip out of their grasp. Top of your class, generally liked, and as I understand you and Draco are the leaders of your year. I look forward to seeing what adventures you and my son will have at Hogwarts.”

Harry nodded his head politely, mentally making a note to ask Draco what exactly he had told his father.

“I must be off for I have business to attend to. Tomorrow I must take a trip to the ministry and Knockturn ally would you both like to accompany me?”

Draco and Harry nodded in unison eagerness showing through their masks. Lucius nodded to both and walked off. Narcissa beamed at both and grabbed their hands. Harry stiffened slightly but allowed the beautiful woman to pull him alongside Draco. She stopped once they reached a fairly comfortable room. Narcissa motioned for them to sit on the obsidian leather sofas. Draco and Harry sat next to each other. The blond immediately relaxed back against the sofa crossing his legs on the sofa seat.

Harry sat rather stiffly unsure how to sit in this beautiful manor. Draco saw this and grinned at his comrade. Narcissa saw that Draco would handle Harry’s discomfort. She sat on the sofa across folding her legs neatly underneath herself. Draco smiled wickedly before pulling Harry’s earlobe. Said boy turned to glare at him.

“Relax Harry. We’re not going to condemn you or something.”

Harry narrowed his eyes but leaned back into the sofa and sat more comfortably.

“Why do you continue to pull me ear Draco?” The smaller boy asked watching the blond out of the corner of his eye.

Draco shrugged. “I don’t honestly know. I just did it to get your attention and it stuck me suppose.”

Narcissa coughed to hide her giggle. She could tell the two boys in front of her would end up together. Narcissa was a proud woman. Her love for her husband could only be matched by her love for her son. They completed her and gave her a reason to live. In the wizarding world she wasn’t too concerned about blood purity. Muggles were an entirely different story. She had nothing against half bloods and would gladly accept Harry into the family.

He seemed like a charming boy. From Draco’s ramblings about the boy she knew he was intelligent, quick witted, sly, cunning, had a hidden playful streak and a troubled past. Narcissa vowed to help this

little boy in front of her for the sake of her son at the very least. Furthermore she had no problem with bisexuals or gays. In the wizarding world it did not matter too much. There were potions that would allow gay couples to get pregnant. Lucius wouldn't mind either. Harry was strong and intelligent. He and Draco's heirs would be powerful. Not to mention Lucius would do anything for his son.

"So Draco, Harry, tell me what has been happening at Hogwarts?" Narcissa asked innocently.

Draco sat up slightly. "Classes are boring. They're bound to get more interesting as the years go on but right now everything is simple. Harry made seeker for the Slytherin Quidditch team. Flint tells me I have the keeper position next year. He wanted me to be seeker but I'm much better at keeper. Blaise and Theodore are enjoyable company. Severus' classes are hilarious. The Gryffindors can't get out fast enough."

Narcissa giggled. "Yes, he always did have an issue against them even till now."

Harry cracked a small smile. "Issue is an understatement. The proper term would be impersonal vendetta. I pity those who have parents that made his life hell in school."

Draco grinned. "I don't believe I've told you about Jamie Potter yet mother."

Harry and Draco shared twin smirks. Narcissa smiled slightly. "I don't believe you have."

"Everyone's little savior is practically a squib. The only course she excels in is Defence against the dark arts. Even then she still isn't as good as Granger, Harry or I. The little twit has been getting private lessons for a year now and she still lacks. It will only be a while now before we end up embarrassing her to the point of tears."

Harry smirked viciously. Narcissa nearly reeled backwards but kept her composure. No child should have that expression. "We won't need to humiliate her, she does it herself constantly. Soon she'll do something irreversible and people will see only a pudgy spoilt girl."

"I imagined this would happen." Narcissa murmured.

Draco and Harry looked at her inquiringly. She smiled slightly and shook her head. "Just lost in my own thoughts."

"I imagine you both are quite tired from your tedious journey. Draco, show Harry to his room. You may continue the conversation in your room."

Draco nodded dutifully and left with Harry by his side. Draco's room was on the third landing. Overall the manor had four floors. The main floor was dedicated to party halls, meeting halls, waiting rooms, recreational rooms and a large parlor. The second floor was the servant quarters. The house elves needed somewhere to stay so the Malfoys had given the entire floor to the elves.

The third floor housed the Malfoy family and guest rooms. The east wing was Narcissa and Lucius'. The west wing was Draco's. The north wing was the guest wing and the south wing was for family members that came to visit for longer periods. And finally the fourth floor was empty. It had odd rooms filled with trinkets from the past. The fourth floor was almost like a gigantic attic.

Draco led Harry to his wing. The blond finally stopped in the middle of the wing. The doors he stood in front of were large ivory doors. They had silver carvings of dragons around the border.

Draco smiled slightly. "Mother and father agreed that it would be best if you stayed in the room connected to mine. The manor is quite large and if you need something I am at a close distance."

With that said Draco pushed open the ivory doors. Harry gasped inaudibly. The room was huge! A bed that could easily fit six grown men stood in the center. The room in all was pretty plain except for a few statues and sofas. All in all Harry loved it. Soft black carpet ran over the expanse of the room. The walls were a forest green. The bed sheets from what Harry could see were ebony silk sheets. The furniture throughout the room consisted of ivory to match the doors. It was simple, but elegant.

“Do you like it?” Draco asked mask in place. Harry saw right through and found it odd that his friend was nervous of his reaction.

Allowing a small smile to capture his lips he nodded. “It’s wonderful. The room is sparse but not empty; I prefer not having items clutter my environment.”

Draco nodded. “I know what you mean. Mother and father are the same way. They don’t like to clutter the manor with expensive items.”

Draco pointed to a door on his left. “That door will lead your room.”

Draco shifted slightly. “We should sleep now. Father is an early riser and he will wake us early as well.”

Harry nodded and made to go to his room. Draco turned the other way and began walking to his closet. The smaller boy stopped and turned.

“Hey Draco.”

“Yeah Harry?” Gray eyes bore into green.

“Thanks for inviting me over for the holidays. It would have sucked staying at school with a bunch of Gryffindors.” Harry honestly was thankful for Draco’s invite. He had been dreading staying at school.

Draco smiled widely. “No problem.”

Harry flashed him a quick grin before entering his own room. Harry stared slightly wide-eyed at his room. It was not as big as Draco’s but it was still large. The bed itself was large enough for four grown men to sleep on it. The room had been decorated with the same style in Draco’s room. The only difference was the furniture placing and the size of the bed and room. Harry quickly changed into his pajamas. The house elves had brought his trunk here already. Harry smiled lightly as he fell into a restful slumber.

Breakfast had been splendid. A house elf had woken Harry up promptly at 7. He had gotten dressed and met Draco in his room. Together they had gone down one of the smaller dining rooms. Lucius and Narcissa had already sat down. Narcissa greeted both warmly. Lucius merely smiled lightly and nodded. His normally cold eyes were warm.

Over breakfast Lucius had initiated a talk about the ministry. He had asked Harry of his opinions of the ministry. Draco and Narcissa had joined in the discussion. The black-haired boy had enjoyed this greatly. He had never talked about his opinions about the ministry to anyone else. It was interesting to compare his views to the Malfoy family views.

Once breakfast was completed Lucius and Narcissa stood. Draco and Harry stood as well and went to stand by the elder Malfoy. Narcissa gave both boys hugs. She absently noted with concern that Harry tensed when she hugged him. Lucius smiled warmly at her and pecked her lips.

"We will be taking a portkey directly into the ministry. Do not wander off the ministry is quite large." He held out a portkey. The two boys immediately placed their fingers onto it. With a sharp tug behind their navels they disappeared.

All three men landed gracefully if a little stiffly in the atrium. Lucius moved to the large desk with a petite woman working behind it. She looked up at his footsteps.

"How may I help you?"

"I require two minor visitor badges." The secretary looked over her glasses at the two boys and conjured up badges. She handed them to Lucius who in turn gave them to Harry and Draco.

The two boys pinned the badges onto their robes and followed Lucius as he strode through the atrium towards the lift. Lucius once again stopped at another wizard.

"Wands please." The elder wizard asked monotonously staring at the two boys. They handed him their wands.

“Dragon heartstring, willow, 12 inches. It has been in use for approximately 3 and a half months correct?”

Draco nodded curtly. The security wizard turned to Harry as he examined the wand. “Phoenix feather, holly, 11 inches. Approximately three and half months?”

Harry nodded as well. The security wizard impaled two slips of parchment onto a small brass spike. Lucius nodded to the wizard. Draco and Harry once again walked briskly in order to keep up with Lucius. At last they reached the lift. The ministry was quite busy this time of the year. Witches and Wizards stood, walked, ran and talked everywhere. Hundreds of little paper aeroplanes flew around the heads of ministry officials. As the trio stepped into the lift a swarm of aeroplanes swooped in and out.

A cool female voice called out the levels and their departments as the lift steadily went down. Lucius tapped their shoulders lightly indicating the next stop was theirs.

“Level Two, Department of Magical Law Enforcement, including the Improper Use of Magic Office, Auror Headquarters and Wizengamot Administration Services.”

The trio stepped out with Lucius in the lead. He walked purposefully towards a large office. Green eyes roamed over the many offices and hallways. They froze as they met a pair of hostile hazel eyes. Minister Fudge was talking excitedly to James Potter. However the elder Potter had stopped listening and instead focused on glaring at his former son. Draco and Lucius exchange looks. They glared coldly at James.

Draco lightly brushed Harry’s arm causing the dark-haired boy to look at the blond. Draco mouthed ‘forget him’ and motioned that they should follow Lucius. Harry nodded slightly. He and Draco ended up waiting outside the office. Harry put up a cold mask as James Potter approached them. Before Harry or Draco could do anything James grabbed Harry’s forearm in a bruising grip.

“You will regret insulting me daughter.” He hissed. “Lily and I are ashamed you had ever been born a Potter. You’ll soon get what you

deserve boy. I'll make sure of it. My connections run deep in this ministry. You can't win, try and save yourself some pain by simply giving up."

Potter made to continue but the door opened and Lucius walked out with an indifferent expression. His gray eyes glinted like steel once he saw James. He sneered at the auror.

"Unhand him Potter. Manhandling children is not becoming of you." His voice was cold and hateful.

James Potter shoved Harry into Lucius forcefully. The elder Malfoy wrapped his arms around Harry's shoulders to steady him. James glared at Harry once more before spinning on his heel and storming out. Lucius turned blank eyes to Harry asking silently if he was all right. Harry nodded stiffly and stepped out of Lucius' clutches.

"We shall be going to Knockturn ally now. I have business in with Mr. Borgin. Draco you may show Harry the pet shop there." His eyes turned to Harry. "Perhaps you will find a companion and a familiar there."

Harry smiled slightly in thanks. He had always wanted a familiar. The elder Malfoy had practically offered him a pet. It was Lucius' way of making him feel better Harry supposed.

"We will be using floo powder to travel to Borgin and Burkes."

The nearest fireplace luckily was only a hallway away. Thankfully they did not encounter James Potter on their way. Mr. Malfoy ushered the two boys to go first. The fireplace was large enough so both could go at once. Harry never having used floo before felt a bit nervous. Draco threw down the glittering powder. With a steady voice he called out "Borgin and Burkes, Knockturn ally."

The two of them stepped out of the fireplace somewhat gracefully. Harry pulled Draco out of the way just as Mr. Malfoy flooded in. Lucius waved his wand to remove the soot from their clothes and skin. Once they looked immaculate he looked pointedly at the door.

The two got the hint and left quickly. Draco led him down three shops into a slightly dilapidated pet shop. Inside Harry could tell why this shop was in Knockturn ally. There were many reptiles, exotic creatures and even a few rare creatures placed in cages all over the shop. Draco guided him towards the snake section of the pet shop. Harry stared in awe at the beautiful snakes of all colors.

"They're beautiful and deadly aren't they?" Draco asked staring at a particular black viper.

Harry's lip curled upwards. "They're misunderstood creatures. Everyone fears them; it's a pity really. Snakes are quite intelligent and witty."

Draco's eyes turned sharply to meet green ones. "You can understand them?" He whispered in awe.

Harry nodded minutely. "I found out when I was three. There was a small garter snake in the meadow I used to play in. She was a companion of sorts during my childhood. But all good things come to an end and she died when I was four. Turns out she was much older than she looked."

"You can't tell anyone else Harry." Draco said urgently still slightly in awe.

He smiled lightly at Draco. "I know."

"Who knows so far?" The blond asked turning his eyes back onto the viper.

"Just you." Harry whispered.

A smile tugged at Draco's lips. He felt something warm grow in his chest. Harry trusted him. Draco could safely say that he trusted Harry as well. Their friendship somehow seemed stronger now.

"Will you be acquiring a pet Harry?" Lucius asked from behind him.

Harry used all his self-restraint not to jump. He turned slowly and shook his head. "No sir. The snakes here are beautiful but I don't feel a connection between us."

Lucius looked at his son. "And you Draco? Have you decided on a familiar?" The blond shook his head negatively. "Let us return to the Manor then."

Chapter 13

Attic Surprises

Lucius held out a small copper ring. Harry and Draco placed their fingers on it trying to keep clearheaded as they were whisked away. Lucius landed elegantly smirking lightly at the two boys who stumbled trying to land gracefully.

“Boys I am afraid I must take my leave. The ministry requires certain work that I must complete. You are welcome to do as you please. Draco perhaps you should give our guest a tour of the manor.” With a slight smile at the two Lucius left.

“Do you want a tour of Malfoy Manor?” Draco asked turning to look at Harry.

The black-haired boy nodded face wooden. Draco cringed inwardly. His friend had turned back into his cold, unattached self. In other words all the warming up Harry had done was now futile. Blaise, Theo and Draco would have to spend time hacking down the green orbbed boy’s defense system again. He had an idea of what might have reverted Harry back into his cold self. His eyes hardened slightly. James Potter would pay for what he had done. The Malfoy patriarch and matriarch had taken an interest in Harry. If Draco could not destroy some semblance in Potter’s life then they would.

Harry felt a pang of hurt flow through him as Draco’s eyes hardened. He didn’t know that the anger was not directed to him. Thinking that his blank face had upset the blond, Harry curled in further on himself blocking all emotion from his eyes. The smaller boy was not stupid, far from it in fact. James Potter grabbing him in such a way reminded him of the past. There were never friends for him to go to, or loving figures to take care of him. So he had done the most reasonable thing. He had created a defensive system of sorts.

The Potters were hard-pressed when it came to reading his emotions. It made them infuriated but Harry had used this as his only weapon. If he could not fight and if he could not show then he would hide and

wait for the storm to pass. How Harry hated himself at the moment. His defensive system was driving his only friend away. Sighing inaudibly Harry hoped that his companion would not leave him to loneliness.

When he had first come to Hogwarts, Harry had been prepared to be a loner. Then Draco came along and offered his hand in friendship. The petite boy had not wanted to admit he wanted friends at first but as time flew by they grew on him. Losing them now would be a setback in his plans but only a minor one. Still, even as he thought this his heart thumped painfully.

Draco's slightly haughty voice brought Harry out of his thoughts. The blond's eyes had softened. They were now soft grey pools of mercury shimmering with curiosity, worry and something unreadable.

"Harry?" He asked once again furrowing his brow.

Green eyes locked into grey. "I'm sorry my mind wandered. What were you saying?"

"I asked if you would like a tour of Malfoy Manor. We could do something else if you don't want to."

Harry's lips curled upwards ever so slightly that Draco almost missed it. Hope sparked up inside the taller boy. "I would enjoy a tour. A manor as old as this one is bound to have secrets." The last words were said in a slightly mysterious tone.

Draco smirked. "Perhaps we'll find a secret passage into a hidden library." Green eyes lightened fractionally at that idea.

"Let's go." Together they set off down the hallways randomly turning into hallways. Harry marked landmarks in case they got lost.

Both boys were left sweaty and tired after hours of exploring. When Draco had started complaining about his feet, Harry decided to end their tour. Most of the floors had been searched limitedly because of a few dangerous articles. The only floor they had yet to go was the attic.

“Draco.” Harry stopped short. Draco arched a brow silently inquiring. “Why don’t we go up to the attic with Blaise and Theodore? Surely they will be allowed to come over for the day.”

Grey eyes lit up excitedly. “That’s a brilliant idea. We will write to them tonight if mother allows them to visit.”

Harry smiled lightly. “Let’s go ask her.”

Draco nodded before grasping Harry’s hand. The blond practically tore down the hallway with Harry stumbling after him at the unexpected pull on his arm. Draco stopped in front of a large door. He released Harry’s hand with a slight blush that Harry thought came from running. Raising a small fist, the younger Malfoy knocked sharply on the door. The strong yet feminine voice of Narcissa Malfoy voiced for them to enter.

“What can I do for you boys?” She asked sealing a freshly written letter.

Draco smiled at his mother. “Harry and I wanted to know if Blaise and Theodore could come to visit.”

“I don’t see a problem with that my little dragon. I expect you to have a casual invitation written for them by supper at the latest.” Her voice was fond but held a motherly stern tone.

The odd pang of jealousy flashed through Harry’s heart once again. He would have to learn to control these until no more showed. If Draco noticed such things or even his parents they would be disgusted with him. Most knew that the Potters did not like him but they never knew to what extent. Many thought it was a simple family disownment for being sorted into Slytherin. No one except Tom and maybe Severus knew it lay further than that.

The ebony-haired boy wanted to keep his friend. He did not want pity not disgust from the blond and that was what would happen should he find out. No, it was easier to keep this from everyone. Fear coursed through his veins. Severus, (no matter how hard Harry had tried to stop him) knew that there was something dark and hidden in Harry’s past.

Warmth.

Fear.

It was a mixture of both. Knowing that someone cared enough to try to find out his past was warming. Fear of being rejected, pitied and repulsed stopped him from spilling his secrets. It was also a strange trepidation that James would find out what he had done. Harry inwardly shuddered. The elder Potter would do anything to murder Harry should it leak that he was abused.

Draco grinned at Harry. "Let's go write it now. I'm positive Theodore will be able to come. Blaise I am not too sure of. His mother can be overprotective."

Harry followed dutifully as Draco led them to his room. Emotions of amusement at the boy's antics shone in his eyes.

Blaise's eyes lit up in excitement then dimmed as he read Draco's letter. His mother would never allow him to go. She was very overprotective of Blaise. Just as he was about to go ask his mother another owl swooped into his bedroom.

Blaise,

I received Draco's invitation. My father and mother have given me permission to go to Malfoy manor tomorrow. I hope to see you there. I know your mother is strict about your well being but try and persuade her that you will be safe. Harry is at Malfoy Manor as well. They told me over the floo that they want to explore the 4th floor attic. Please come. Although I am the one sending this letter Draco and Harry have expressed their thoughts as well in this letter.

Eagerly awaiting your reply,

Theodore

Blaise sighed heavily. His father would allow him to go. His mother though was a different story. All his life Blaise had been overprotected by his mother. She loved her son to death and had been hard-pressed when it came to leaving their manor.

His father had spent two weeks reassuring Blaise's mother Matia, that Hogwarts was safe. Hopefully his healthy status would ease her paranoid mind. With another deep breath he stepped out into the garden. It was beautiful and situated in the heart of the manor. There was no roof and the stone walls surrounding it had been covered over with vines. Small stone boulders were scattered at random intervals for seats. Dozens upon dozens of flora lit up the dreary garden making it seem enchanted.

The olive-skinned woman sat on a stone reading a thick romance novel. Blaise smiled. She looked beautiful in her pale golden robes. He had retained many features from his mother. Both had teal eyes, tall, willowy features and tanned skin. His father however had been the source of his sable hair and sharp features. Matia had soft delicate features and striking auburn hair. Their family was Italian so the tanned skin was from both sides of his family. At the sound of Blaise's soft footsteps Matia looked up and smiled dotingly at her son.

"Ciao tesoro. What may I do for you?"

"Buon pomeriggio Madre. Draco has invited me to his manor. He has set the date for tomorrow. May I go?"

Matia pursed her plump lips. "Blaise bambino..." she began.

Blaise put on his best pleading look. "Per favore madre, la supplico."

With a small frown she placed her book next to her feet. "You may go Blaise...but! If I see a single scratch on you... ti chiudero a chiave nella tua stanza!"

Laughing lightly Blaise hugged his mother tightly. "Grazie!"

With a light push in the direction of the door Matia spoke sternly. "I want to see that you have finished all your winter homework by tomorrow. No son of mine will be a procrastinator." Even using the stern tone Blaise could see the smile in her eyes.

"Sì mama."

With a grin Blaise bounded into his room. Using one of the casually stamped parchments Blaise wrote a neat letter to Theodore and an acceptance letter to Draco. He had been to Malfoy Manor only once before. It had been when he was 4 years old. Draco had been snotty and rude to him at the time. The poor boy had run away from the Malfoy in vain attempt to get away from him. The toddler Blaise had ended up in the attic. At first it had looked foreboding but after countless wandering it became mysterious and a sort of playground. Blaise couldn't wait to explore the attic now that he was older.

Harry and Draco stood in front of the fireplace although at a respectable distance. Blaise and Theodore would be coming anytime now. The fireplace lit up with a great whoosh of green flames and out tumbled Blaise. Luckily he did not fall nor injure himself. The teal-eyed boy had just made it next to Harry. Barely a second later Theodore flew out of the fireplace with little more grace than Blaise.

"Should we go to the attic straight away?" Asked Draco staring at his friends in question.

Brown eyes widened in realization. "I just remembered!"

"What?" Harry inquired taking a seat on an ottoman.

Theo smirked. "My mum was talking to my dad about their school days. They didn't know I was eavesdropping when they mentioned something about lifting ministry tracking spells off their wands so they could do underage magic." The tips of the mousy-haired boy's ears turned red.

“That would certainly help us.” Harry mused rolling the idea around in his mind. He could start practicing more difficult spells instead of learning theory over the summer. Harry cursed inwardly. The boy still didn’t know where he would end up during the summer.

Blaise turned eager eyes onto Draco. “Why don’t we search the Malfoy library? If the Notts have the book then surely your library would.”

Freely hanging platinum hair swung as Draco nodded. “We can search for the book first. If we have time then we could explore the attic. Underage magic is far more useful than exploring the upper floor.”

The four boys quickly commenced to the library. Once they were out of the room a smirking Narcissa Malfoy appeared from under a disillusionment charm. She was quite proud of the four boys. They had once again put their brains to use. But, unfortunately none of the boys would find the book in the library. Narcissa had kept it stored away with the other dark arts books.

The book containing the spell wasn’t really dark arts but the spell stopped her from putting it in the library. The regal woman would have to set the book in the library sometime soon though. She wanted the 11 year olds to find it and hopefully figure out how to perform the spell. It was no easy spell but it was not extremely difficult either. Smirk firmly in place she called up a house elf.

“What can Dobby do for Mistress?” Asked the wide-eyed elf, as he bowed down low.

Narcissa’s eyes were impassive as she summoned the book to herself. Smiling lightly at the house elf she gave it to him. “I want you to place this under a shelf near the boys in the library. Be discreet and do not let them know you have been there. I do not want you to make it look like the book appeared out of a void either. This is why you must do so quickly while they are not looking.”

Dobby nodded frantically. “Dobby will do it Mistress.”

Narcissa dismissed him with a wave of her hand. Humming cheerfully to herself she walked up the stairs intent on thinking of ways to pleasure her husband. Plotting could do that to you she thought absentmindedly imagining Lucius tied up in silk.

Brown eyes widened as their owner tripped on a misplaced book. Harry and Draco watched in slow motion as Theodore fell right into Blaise who fell under a table. Draco winced as a book fell off the table and onto the willowy boy's head.

"Fuck!"

Blaise swiped his hand under the bookshelf to his right in an ineffective attempt to get up. Tanned fingers wrapped around a book curiously and pulled it out. Handing the book to Theo the sable-haired boy hoisted himself up. While he did this intelligent brown eyes skimmed through the book. At the very end of the book Theodore stopped and stared. His eyes glinted with a mixture of delight and mischief. His three companions saw this and edged closer to see what was so interesting.

"The spell is in here. It looks complicated but I think we could manage."

"Copy the spell. I doubt we can take the book from the manor. Mother told me that any dark arts books cannot be removed from the manor without Father's permission." Draco hurriedly gathered parchment and writing utensils while saying this.

Theodore quickly but neatly wrote down the spell and all detail about it. They wouldn't want to miss something important. Once done he gave the parchment to Harry immediately scanned the parchment, face unreadable. Draco, Blaise and Theo exchanged looks. Their work on getting Harry to open up had failed. The trio would have to backtrack and work slowly from scratch once again. They were determined to get their friend to allow his masks to fall. The only problem was that, there were so many masks.

Harry looked at the other three, face blank as ever. "We will be able to perform this. The spell is O.W.L level and will take some work. It will take approximately 2 weeks of practicing for me to be able to perform it. Either all of you can practice with me or one of you can. I will need one of you to perform this on my wand after I have taken the tracking off of yours."

Blaise draped his arm across Harry's shoulders not noticing the smaller boy tense. "We will be helping you whether it takes us 2 weeks or 2 months. If this is O.W.L level then it will only help up later. The spell is much too useful to not practice."

Draco refrained from narrowing his eyes when Blaise wrapped his arm around Harry. He had noticed how the boy tensed up and from Theo's calculated gaze the mousy-haired boy had seen it too. Grey eyes met brown. Silently both vowed to converse about it later, whether they would include Blaise or not was still being thought over.

"It's only 2p.m." Draco announced. "We can still explore the attic."

Harry gratefully pulled out from under Blaise's arm and walked out not waiting for the others. Exchanging small smirks the other three made haste to follow him. Together they walked up the steps making quick work of them. Living at Hogwarts gave one daily exercise. The four stories seemed like nothing for the four Slytherins.

"Which way first?" Theo asked calmly inspecting their surroundings as Harry and Draco had already begun to do. Blaise quickly caught on and memorized the hallway. They would need to remember this certain one so they would not get lost. Unlike most attics, the Malfoy attic was an entire floor.

"Right." Draco spoke decisively. Harry nodded his agreement and so they went.

The hallways were bright with warm sunlight. Windows were sparse but somehow managed to light the entire floor up. After inspecting the first hallway they realized that it used to be a housing hallway. Many of the rooms had been bedrooms with one or two beds each. Turning into the second hallways they noticed that it was slightly darker. Striding at a brisker pace the quartet examined the rooms and found

absolutely nothing interesting in them. This hallway had been for housing as well.

Backtracking a bit then turning into a hallway the four found themselves at an intersection. There were only four hallways left in the attic. Taking the one to their left they were once again disappointed to find nothing but old useless artifacts. The next two hallways were the same. Old, broken, unusable and dangerous objects littered those hallways. None of the objects were touchable or even worth touching.

With a deep breath Draco led them down the last hallway. There were only four rooms in this hallway. Each one was humungous. The first seemed like a private parlor, the second a small ballroom, the third a plain empty room. Looking at each other the four pushed open the door to the final room. Inside was a study and a small wooden chest.

Smiling lightly with renewed hope in their eyes the boys strolled in. Harry, Theodore and Blaise began searching around the study while Draco went straight to the chest hidden in the corner of the room. Half of it was obscured by shadows but not enough to make it invisible.

Draco's slender fingers reached out and pushed the lid. It did not open. Spying a small statue on the desk, Draco grabbed it. Lifting it high over his head he brought it down fast.

CRACK!

Blaise jumped while Harry and Theo looked like they had barely restrained themselves. Draco smiled apologetically then smirked. Sifting through the trunk his smirk soon turned into a frown. There was nothing useful in here. Just as he was about to close the trunk a small flap caught his eye. Grey eyes widened as the flap revealed a secret pocket.

Inside were four journals. One was green, the other silver, then black and finally navy. Draco's eyes widened while the others stared confusedly.

“Mother told me about there. My grandfather and his brothers used these journals to communicate. Once the writer died their entries disappeared.”

Blaise and Theo looked confused while realization was in Harry’s eyes. “Explain.” Blaise said gathering the journals and placing them on the ground.

“Well if each of us takes a journal then it will be declared as ours for as long as we live. To operate it you must write down the person’s name in brackets along with your own and then the message. It will instantly appear in their journal.”

Blaise gaped slightly while Theo smirked. “These will be useful. Does it matter which one we take?”

Draco shook his head. Theodore took the green one. Blaise picked up the navy one carefully. Harry contemplatively took the black one leaving Draco with the silver one.

“Perhaps we should test them.” Harry muttered gathering spare quills and ink pots from the large desk behind them.

(To Draco Malfoy from Harry) Do we have to write the full name of the person or just the first?

(To Harry from Draco) Since we are the only four with journals that will communicate this way there is no need for last names.

(To Theodore from Blaise) Does it work Theo?

(To Blaise from Theodore) No, you are just imagining this

Blaise sneered at Theodore tauntingly. Theo simply rolled his eyes and inspected the journal. “There is nothing else here, why don’t we just take the journals and go back now. Mrs. Malfoy should be informed that we now own these.”

Draco nodded. “Mother will be pleased that we have found these. She had tried to find them before but could not. Although she was looking for them she did not want to use it for herself. Father will be

pleased as well. He does not care much for the journal's properties but the fact that grandfather created these. Grandfather's belongings had been destroyed during the first war when he died. There are few things which are left that were his. Father will be pleased to note that these have survived."

"Lovely." Blaise muttered absently flipping through blank pages of the journal.

The Slytherins walked into the parlor where Narcissa was currently writing a letter. They waited patiently and politely while she finished. Once the letter had been composed and sent the blonde turned to look at the boys.

"What can I do for you boys?" She asked kindly.

"We found Grandfather's journals!" Draco said excitedly.

Blue eyes lit up. "Really? That's wonderful. This will certainly help at Hogwarts and during holidays."

The four nodded. Narcissa frowned slightly and softly said tempus. Her eyes widened. "Oh goodness gracious! Your mothers will be quite worried if you stay a moment longer." Narcissa led them to the fireplace while murmuring "I knew I forgot something."

Blaise waved goodbye and floo-ed home. Theodore smiled lightly then said goodbye as he too left for his manor.

"It has been a tiring day." Narcissa spoke softly. "Draco, take Harry to his room. I am sure both of you are exhausted. I will send Dobby with food but I want you to eat and get some rest. Severus is coming over tomorrow and I would like you to be well rested."

Draco and Harry nodded then left quickly both eagerly awaiting the next day.

A/N:

I took a bit longer then expected but I couldn't seem to get to writing. I've had so much homework this last week my hand nearly died of a

hand cramp. I know this chapter isn't very exciting really and I suppose it is a bit boring but I needed this to happen so it did. At least the chapter is not horribly short.

Once again I would like to express my deepest thanks to Martin for beta-ing this story. Thanks go to Nekoneko-xyz for correcting the Italian.

ITALIAN WORDS

Ciao tesoro – Hello darling

Buon pomeriggio – good afternoon

Madre – mother

Bambino – child

Per favore madre, la supplico – Please mother, I beg

Ti chiuderò a chiave nella tua stanza – I will lock you in your room

Grazie – Thank you

Sì - yes

Chapter 14

Bonding

Severus flooded to Malfoy Manor much earlier than expected. Narcissa looked up from her book face guarded until she saw it was Severus. The petite woman smiled warmly.

“Severus! I thought you would be arriving later. This is unexpected and the boys have yet to wake but I assure you they will be delighted that you’ve made it earlier than proposed.”

Severus nodded, eyes warming at his dear friend. Narcissa placed a bookmark in her book and stood gracefully. The potion master followed the elegant woman as she led him to his rooms. This was not necessary as Severus had his own personal room in the manor but it was courteous and the lanky man was a close friend.

“What do you have planned for today Sev?” Narcissa asked kindly turning her head slightly to look at Severus.

“I plan to let the boys suggest an activity. There are a few potions which I would like to discuss with them. Harry will no doubt be interested but Draco will defer the topic. Potions do not appeal to him when Harry is present.”

Narcissa giggled clapping her hands together joyfully. “You’ve noticed as well!”

Severus allowed a small smile to crease his lips. “They will be a superior match.”

The blonde matriarch stopped suddenly. She placed a kind hand on Severus’ shoulder. “Paternal feelings agree with you Severus. Hopefully Harry feels the same.” She said softly smiling at her surrogate brother. Coal black eyes widened fractionally. Narcissa simply smiled before continuing down the long hallways of the manor.

“Severus!” Draco grinned hugging his ‘uncle.’

Harry stood back uncertainly. The 11 year old was unsure about how to act about his Professor outside school. Both Severus and Draco saw this. Before Harry knew it Draco pushed him into Severus’ arms. Glaring at the blond Harry stiffened slightly as Severus hugged him lightly before stepping back.

“Hello Harry. I trust you’re stay at Malfoy Manor has been satisfactory?”

“It’s been much better than I expected.” Harry said with a slight smile.

Narcissa and Lucius smiled lightly when they heard Harry’s response. Unfortunately the regal woman had missed the awkward hug while she was greeting Lucius as he stepped out of the floo.

“Mother, Father, Harry and I must talk to Severus privately. May we be excused?” Draco put on his innocent expression unnecessarily.

Narcissa never could resist her son when he gave her that look. “Yes of course darling. Make sure you come down to lunch.” Lucius smirked. His son was growing to be quite the manipulator when he grew up.

“Well?” Draco asked peering closely at Severus.

Once seated comfortably the dark haired man arched an eyebrow.

“Have you heard anything about what James Potter is planning to do to me?” Harry supplied helpfully from his perch on the armchair across Severus’.

“Potter is being discreet for once in his miserable life. Neither Lucius nor I have heard a word mentioning you where Potter is concerned.”

Harry remained emotionless. A small frown materialized on Draco's pointed features.

Seeing an upsetting mood start to descend on his two favorite boys Severus quickly changed the subject. "I wished to talk to you both about an apprenticeship in Potions. Although it will take place in your 6th year I have taken it upon myself to introduce you to the potions earlier than customary. This will assist you both with your decisions regarding Potions. Neither of you are to be pressured into it. I want my apprentices willing and interested."

Draco sat down next to Harry and leaned forward slightly resting his elbows on his knees. Harry did not move or make any inclination that he was interested but his eyes which were trained on Severus were slightly calculating and held a hint of curiosity.

Severus smiled inwardly and leant back in his chair as he prepared for a long discussion on Potions and their properties. He doubted that the two boys in front of him would retain much but at least it had gotten their minds off of their previous thoughts.

Severus had assumed correctly about Draco's inability to delve into Potions when Harry was around. Only one hour into their talk the somewhat tall blond stood decisively.

"Sev, it's the holidays. Why don't we do something else today?" Draco turned to Harry. "Do you want to talk more about Potions Harry?"

"If you don't mind Draco." Harry answered politely eyes trained on Severus as if trying to tell him something.

Severus' years as a spy had paid off. He quickly caught the boy's eye and nodded minutely. It was obvious to the potions master that Harry wanted to talk about something completely different but could not with Draco there.

“Draco, in my rooms I have presents. Perhaps meanwhile Harry and I finish our discussion you could take a short trip to place those presents under the tree?”

The Malfoy heir opened his mouth to speak but Severus interrupted him. “I am well aware that the house elves could do that. The fact that you are bored with the current conversation while neither Harry nor I am means you should do something productive within the time it takes to conclude it.”

Draco pouted slightly but nodded dejectedly. Shooting a look at Harry, Draco left the room. Severus turned to Harry with an expectant look. The ebony-haired boy looked hesitant.

“Could you tell me about the dark lord?” Harry asked his emerald gaze piercing Severus’ obsidian.

Shock overcame Severus as he froze inwardly, outwardly looking expressionless. “Why would one of your age and upbringing wish to know about the dark lord?”

Harry winced slightly at the hidden insult in that line. Severus felt something clamp around his heart at the small wince. He stood gracefully and seated himself next to Harry who looked at him warily.

“I apologize. That was uncalled for. Your request caught me unexpectedly.” The hook nosed man tried to explain.

Harry smiled slightly and nodded. “I know what you mean.”

Severus smiled slightly at the young boy. Both understood that although their methods of defense mechanisms were different they were still present.

“The dark lord believed in blood purity. He was quite sane despite the words of Albus Dumbledore. The headmaster believed that his archrival wished to destroy the world of all muggles and mudbloods. This however was not the case. The dark lord knew that he could not do such a thing. He had devised a plan to efficiently cut all contact from the muggle world off. The muggles are dangerous to us. Their advanced technology could kill us much faster than a dozen killing

curses. Dumbledore could not understand that, he insisted that they would never harm us. They went their separate ways spreading more chaos to the wizarding world.”

Harry unconsciously leaned into Severus’ side as the older man draped an arm across his shoulders.

“Luck was not on the dark lord’s side when he was defeated by an infant at his reign of power. Many believe that he has yet to die while others think he has gone for good. Personally I ruminate that the dark lord is far too powerful to simply die of a backlash.

“Ruminate?” Harry asked arching a brow similarly like Severus.

“To ponder or to think.” Severus explained amusedly.

“Severus.” The sable-haired boy looked up into the face of the most hated professor at Hogwarts.

“Yes Harry?”

“Thank you.”

Severus simply smiled curling his arm tighter around Harry’s shoulder. His heart soared when Harry did not resist the action choosing to curl further into him.

Narcissa smiled giddily from behind a portrait. Things were working out spectacularly. She hoped fate would spare some mercy on them as simply pass over the stage where everything falls apart.

It was Christmas day and both Harry and Draco had been woken up by a house elf. The two boys dressed quickly. Harry entered Draco’s room hesitantly unsure whether the boy was dressed. Thankfully Draco was dressed and awaiting Harry. He grinned at the shy raven-haired boy.

“Hurry up Harry! Mother, Father and Severus are probably already downstairs.”

Green eyes shimmered with amusement at the childlike image that Draco projected. Apparently while Harry was thinking Draco had become impatient as all children on Christmas day. The blond child grabbed Harry’s wrist then proceeded to run down the stairways dragging Harry behind him.

Both boys were flushed by the time Draco stopped at the comfortable living room. Inside there was a huge Christmas tree decorated splendidly with live fairies. Underneath the tree was what interested the occupants the most. A huge pile of presents lay innocently under the tree waiting to be opened. Harry saw that Narcissa, Lucius and Severus were indeed already seated around the tree waiting patiently for them.

“Happy Christmas.” Harry smiled slightly inclining his head in greeting.

Draco followed suit hugging his parents and Severus. “Happy Christmas.”

The three adults smiled letting their masks drop in favor of enjoying the day. Draco wasted no time before taking a seat between his parents. Harry took a seat next in between Narcissa and Severus smiling at his Professor. Severus returned the smile ignoring the smug look the regal woman shot him.

“I believe we shall start with the youngest to the oldest.” Lucius informed them pulling out his wand.

Neatly he separated the presents according to the receiver. Harry was shocked to see more presents than he expected in his pile. Lucius floated a rather lumpy looking package to Harry. The others looked at him with interest. None of the room’s inhabitants had wrapped that present for the small boy.

Harry neatly opened the wrapping paper ignoring Draco’s incredulous stare. He had always unwrapped his presents with care, it made it all the more sweeter during times which weren’t as nice. On top of a beautiful robe was a card.

Master Harry,

This be yours' goodbye gift from Knobby and house elves.

Harry ran his hand shakily over the expensive fabric. It was almost identical in design to the emerald one he had received on his birthday. The fabric for this robe was ebony. The semblance of the color did not escape Harry. He inwardly thanked the house elves who had been nothing but kind to him. Smiling fully Harry lay the robe on his lap.

"Who is it from dear?" Narcissa asked kindly.

"Some old friends." Harry replied subtly dismissing the topic.

Narcissa simply smiled and motioned for Lucius to give Draco his present.

"It's from Blaise and Theodore. They combined gifts." Draco said ripping up the paper diligently.

Inside there was an enormous box of candy from Honeydukes. "Harry probably ended up with the same thing." Draco happily placed the large box at his feet.

They continued opening presents from relatives and whatnot while Harry sat back and watched. Finally the presents were limited down to those they had gotten each other. Severus opened his present from Lucius and Narcissa first. He smiled gratefully at the rare potions ingredients. Being a Potions master at Hogwarts limited things Severus could buy without endangering students. The elder Malfoys knew this and had taken it upon themselves to get him rare ingredients every Christmas.

Next Severus unwrapped Draco's present to him. He snorted lightly at the stack of personally stamped parchments made especially for detentions.

"You're welcome Sev." Draco mock huffed.

Surprisingly Lucius chuckled and lightly cuffed his son. Draco simply grinned at his father. A pang of Jealousy shot through Harry again. He squashed it again looking at Severus intently. The next gift was from him. The greasy haired man opened the gift and nearly dropped the vial after inspecting it.

“Dragon Venom, where did you get this?” Severus asked sharply.

Harry coughed lightly. “Norbert.”

“The bite was from this?” Severus asked shooting an amused look at Harry who flushed slightly in embarrassment.

The other three Malfoys arched eyebrows in unison scaring Harry. Luckily Severus diverted their attention by giving Harry a one-armed hug. The sable-haired boy leaned into the hug. Narcissa shot a ‘told-you-so’ look at Lucius who simply smirked in reply.

“Thank you Harry, this is very much appreciated.”

Harry grinned at him settling into the casually draped arm around his shoulders. Draco smiled secretively. He could tell that Severus had a tender spot concerning Harry. Perhaps this would suit both of his two dear friends. Draco however could not explain the pang of envy that pulsed through his heart at the two. He put it off as not used to sharing Severus.

Lucius distracted everyone’s thoughts by putting a gift on Harry’s lap. “This is from Narcissa and myself.”

“You didn’t have to sir.” Harry began.

Draco glared exasperatedly. “Just open it!”

Rolling his eyes Harry opened it as pre-cautious as he had been with his other presents. Unlike the others this one was a small simple box barely the size of his palm. Harry refrained from biting his lip as he opened the lid. Inside was a key. Shocked emerald eyes met warm blue ones. Narcissa beamed.

"This key is for your very own room here at Malfoy Manor. It's situated in Draco's wing. We've all agreed that since your predicament is troubling and leaves you homeless that you are welcomed here at the Manor."

Lucius did not smile but his eyes were glinting with amusement and acceptance. If Harry made his son happy then the boy would be allowed a room. He himself had gotten rather fond of Harry as well. Lucius did not even need to ask Narcissa or Severus. They had practically fallen head over heels for the boy, platonically of course.

"I don't know what to say." Harry whispered trailing a finger down the key. He cursed himself inwardly for the clichéd line he had spoken.

"Accept it." Severus said simply staring down his crooked nose.

Harry beamed. "Thank you. You have no idea what this means to me."

Draco handed Harry his last present. "This one is from me. Of course you already know what it is seeing as how you helped me chose it."

Harry snorted but opened the present giving Draco his thanks. It was a rather large book titled 'Your inner animal' it was an animagus text. Now normally this would have been a very foolish thing to send but Harry and Draco had spent time charming the texts so that they would appear to look like Hogwarts, A history. Surprisingly charming the texts had been easy as they simply required a base level glamour charm. After learning silencing spells and invisibility spells the glamour charm had been straightforward.

Harry placed his presents in a neat pile at his feat. Gracefully he gathered Draco's presents and placed them in front of the eager blond. Harry stepped back as Draco practically tore up the presents in his haste. Lucius and Narcissa had given their son a large chest filled with Quidditch balls. Draco thanked his parents jovially and hugged them both.

"Did you plan your presents together?" Draco asked eyes glinting as he surveyed Severus' gift which turned out to be a slip of parchment.

"Of course not." Severus said.

"What is it?" Harry questioned glancing at the parchment.

"It's a pre-order for the new Nimbus 2001 which hasn't even come out yet!" Draco grinned squeezing Severus tightly.

Draco looked at Harry briefly before carefully opening his gift. The smaller boy smiled at his friend's antics. Draco pulled out the silver chain wide-eyed. He dropped the box and placed the onyx dragon in the center of his palm.

"It's beautiful Harry." Draco grinned at him. Harry blushed. "There is more to it but Mr. and Mrs. Malfoy should open theirs as well first."

Confused the two elder Malfoys did as told. Narcissa admired the dazzling earrings. Lucius arched a brow at the cufflinks. "How did you afford these?" He asked.

Harry cleared his throat slightly. "It's a long story. I want to explain about the presents. I modified them. They have tracking charms on them. I also added an untouchable charm so they are in tune with each other only. Also if you wish to know where the other's location is the response will be inserted into your mind. This way unwanted guests cannot hear what you wish to know."

Lucius looked impressed while Narcissa and Draco gave him tight hugs. Harry tensed momentarily before stiffly relaxing into the hugs. "Thank you Harry. These are quite useful and tasteful as well." Narcissa spoke warmly. Lucius inclined his head in agreement.

Draco put his necklace in Harry's hand. "Put it on me." He instructed slightly haughty. Harry cheerfully obliged.

The rest of the day was spent lazing about listening to Narcissa's angelic voice sing tales of old. Harry listened raptly absently leaning into Draco who in turn leaned into Lucius. Severus sat on Harry's other side with his eyes closed as he listened to tales he had heard growing up. He looked down at Harry and frowned inwardly at the similarity between their childhoods. Although physically the ebony-

haired boy seemed a child mentally he was much older and much wiser towards the cons of humankind.

He would do his best to instruct, protect and care for this boy that was forgotten.

Chapter 15

I Can Relate

“I want to show you something.” Draco did not look at Harry as he continued to walk.

Harry followed, his mind was reeling inwardly. Draco stopped at a large pair of glass doors. The glass had a frosted look which made it difficult to see outside. The doors opened automatically when Draco placed his hand on the silver knobs. Grey eyes brightened when Harry gasped.

In front of them was a large garden. Hundreds of flora decorated the lawn making it bright and beautiful. A light sweeping of snow covered the ground completing the enchanting picture. In the middle of the garden were silver Narcissi. They were planted in a design which resembled the Malfoy Crest.

“It’s fantastic.” Harry carefully brushed snow off of a lily. Although it was the name of his hated mother, Harry had always loved the flower.

Draco instinctively interrupted his thoughts. “All pureblood families have large gardens made to their preference. Mother tends to these flowers herself and charms them throughout the winter.”

Harry eyed a small clearing. From the bits of stone showing he could make out that a fountain resided there. Draco caught the look. The taller boy grabbed Harry’s hand and led him to the clearing.

The most beautiful fountain Harry had ever seen stood there. The water that would normally be flowing was frozen solid. It glinted like crystal, reflecting the colours of the Narcissi.

Surrounding the water were two Veelas. Their eyes were made out of Sapphire making them look exotic. Diminutive bits of diamond glittered on their dresses shining blindingly. The rays of the sun overhead the statues shone into the diamond making small rainbows

of colours. The colours outlined the edges of the Veelas giving them an ethereal glow.

“Mother placed the diamonds on herself in certain places so that the glow would always outline the statues.” Draco stood next to Harry admiring the beauty in front of them. “Sometimes when I was younger I came here to bask in the quiet beauty.”

Harry smiled at Draco and grabbed his hand in a friendly lock. “There was a small clearing near a forest where I used to go for quiet when I lived at Potter manor.” Draco moved closer to Harry so that they could share their warmth. “Was it nice there?” Grey eyes tinted with curiosity.

“It was beautiful. The forest was thick but it was cheerful and bright. The grass was always green in the forest, even in the winter time.” Harry’s voice had gone slightly dreamy.

A cool wind swept through the air chilling both boys. Harry shivered unintentionally causing Draco to take notice. “Let’s go inside.”

Harry nodded gratefully, pleased to go inside and into the warmth. He hoped that Draco would bring him here again someday in the summertime.

After their excursion Draco and Harry had been researching in the library to complete their homework for the better part of the day. Draco had become quite fed up and had dragged Harry out of the library. Sending one last longing look at the book haven Harry followed Draco feeling resigned. Abruptly Draco stopped and pulled Harry into a hidden alcove behind a tapestry.

“Shush.” Draco covered Harry’s mouth with his hand. Platinum hair fell into the boy’s face as he tilted his head to hear the conversation outside.

Lucius and Severus were talking normally about usually ministry issues. Harry glared at the blond who continued to listen rapidly. Draco's eavesdropping paid off when Lucius asked Severus to accompany him to his study. Draco had explained to Harry that only important discussions took place in Lucius' study. Silver met Emerald in an understanding look. They would follow.

Suddenly Harry realized that Draco's hand was still over his mouth. Harry listened carefully for any noises indicating that the men were still outside. Thankfully there were none. Harry opened his mouth slightly and bit down on one of Draco's fingers causing the unsuspecting boy to yelp and cradle his hand.

"What was that for?" Draco asked petulantly stepping out from behind the tapestry.

"For covering my mouth." Harry replied with ease. "Do you know how much bacteria has now infested my mouth because you put your hand on it." Harry said rhetorically.

Draco glared and stalked off in the direction of the study. Harry noted that although he stalked the Malfoy heir made little to no noise. Silently Harry caught up to Draco curious as to what could be so significant that Lucius had taken Severus to his study for.

Draco pressed an ear to a doorknob and motioned Harry to do likewise. Harry dropped to his knees and pressed his ear to the other doorknob, keeping careful not to lean on the door. Inside Lucius and Severus sat down nursing tumblers of brandy.

"The dark lord has announced his presence." Severus said flatly.

"He shall return soon enough. The marks have darkened considerably." Lucius took a sip of the brandy relishing in the slight burn at the back of his throat.

"Dumbledore is getting suspicious of Quirrell and me. He has yet to make any moves towards us yet. Knowing the old coot he shall try an ill conceived strategy to get the girl-who-lived to save the day like the

heroine she is." Severus spat bitterly. "If all goes to plan Potter Jr. will join the deceased and our lord shall rise."

Lucius frowned thoughtfully. "He shall not be pleased with my progress over the years. I have denied any loyalty publicly to save myself from imprisonment. Master will not kill me, but I shall not get off easily."

"Our lord will understand. He isn't the incompetent lunatic that the precious light side believes him to be." Severus lazily swirled the amber liquid in his glass.

"Why Quirrell?" Lucius pondered absentmindedly changing the subject.

"I do not know. Evidence leads me to believe that Quirrell was weak minded. He foolishly traveled into our lord's hiding place or was lured there. From there the dark lord possessed him knowing he was going to be the Defence against the Dark Arts Professor."

Lucius curled his lip in disgust. "Let us hope that Quirrell can complete his mission. I have inkling that it will be much more arduous than he thinks."

"Subtly never was his strong point." Severus agreed. "He was a fool the first time and he is still a fool. The Potter brat might even succeed defeating Quirrell if not for the dark lord. His father was a fool as well, always meddling in affairs which could have led to his death."

Lucius raised his glass slightly. "We, you and I, stopped him *dead* in his tracks."

"As I've always said 'stupidity is hereditary'." Both men chuckled deeply obviously sharing an inside joke.

"Draco and Harry have been awfully quiet lately. For two 11 year old boys you would think they were a little more rambunctious. Malfoys are taught to be mature but even I at that age could not stop myself from walking through the snow countless times." Lucius cast a glance at the window.

“Shall we leave? I’m afraid that those two will envisage that we are in here and attempt to pry.”

When Severus made to get up Harry pulled Draco back from the door and into the opposite hallway. While Draco had been listening Harry had been watching. His viridian gaze followed the two men’s actions. Harry had seen Severus start to rise signaling the end of the conversation. Harry’s common sense had saved both boys from exposure. Draco smirked at the black-haired boy in gratitude. After making sure the coast was clear Draco quickly led Harry to his bedroom.

Harry lay back on the large bed resting on his elbows. Draco had lain down on his side next to Harry. Said boy tilted his head to look at Draco with a calculating expression.

“What we just heard confirms it.” Harry said his eyes losing some of their ferocity.

“The question is...what are we going to do about it?” Draco said tonelessly.

“We get to the stone first.” Harry smirked devilishly.

Draco’s heart sped up a little. The poor boy was confused as to why his heart had doubled its rate. He looked Harry dead in the eye. “We need to talk to Hagrid.”

Harry nodded in agreement. “He may be able to give us clues towards what we will face.”

Draco frowned. “There will most likely be other things after Fluffy. Hagrid may be able to tell us what sort of obstacles will be in our way. Perhaps we should send Dumbledore a letter from the ministry informing him that they need his assistance immediately. That would leave the pathway clear.”

Harry rolled onto his side suddenly shocking Draco who lost his balance and fell on top of Harry. “Oof!” Came the slightly muffled cry from the blond whose face was buried in Harry’s neck. Both boys flushed slightly as they untangled themselves from each other.

Draco mumbled staring fixedly at the ceiling. Harry stared at the floor determined not to meet Draco's eyes. "Sorry." They spoke in unison. Both boys looked up at the same time to gauge each other's reactions. Shocked green met grey before flaring up in humor. Both boys collapsed on the bed laughing.

:Dream:

A slender sable-haired boy stepped back his breath hitching when the wall met his back. His wavy hair fell attractively in front of his face shielding his eyes. Bruises decorated his face and arms. Several older boys cornered him smirking malevolently. The largest boy threw a punch into the boy's stomach. Before things could get worse a high pitched female voice called for lunch. The bullies rushed off eagerly sneering at the beaten boy just before they left.

The boy looked up and Harry saw the most dazzling blue eyes. "Tom?" Harry whispered in shock.

Tom looked much older now. His face had become longer and his cheek bones more prominent. His nose was still the same sharp aristocratic nose but it seemed to fit perfectly on his face. He looked amazing for a teen.

"Harry." Tom spat bitterly glaring at the boy. "Third year begins in a week."

Green eyes clouded over with confusion. "What did I do?"

A sigh was expelled from pink lips. "Nothing, you did nothing Harry. Let's go before they come back." Tom extended a hand. He smiled slightly when the other took it.

The young teen took Harry out of the orphanage and down a meadow. The grass was lush and waist high. In the middle of the meadow was a dilapidated shack. Tom led Harry into the structure. Far in the

corner near a small window was a large lump which resembled a sofa. The two boys sat down side by side staring at each other.

"I'm sorry for snapping at you." Tom whispered his usually cold eyes warming.

"I don't blame you. It looks like I've been gone for ages." Harry spoke equally as soft. "Is this what they do to you Tom? Or is it worse?" Lightly slender fingers traced bruises.

Tom hissed in pain. "I'm sorry." Harry hugged him carefully minding the bruises. Tom wrapped his arms around the smaller boy and gratefully leaned into the warmth. His bones felt cold although it was summer. It was more of an emotional cold then a physical cold but the warmth helped.

"Want to talk?" Harry offered.

A negative shake.

"I know how it feels."

A sad smile.

"My own parents had no heart, no love, no tact, no intelligence and no emotion when it came to me."

A light squeeze.

"I have no one."

"You have me." Tom finally looked up into Harry's eyes.

"Do I? Does this mean that you have me also?" The smaller boy lightly rested his head on the other's shoulder.

"I...don't know. I think it does." Tom looked thoughtful for a moment. "We shall have each other." He nodded decisively.

"Good." Harry smiled genuinely.

"I feel cold." Pain flitted through blue and green eyes.

"In your bones?" Harry inquired.

"Not really physically..." Tom said.

"But emotionally." Harry finished.

"Yes." Both spoke in agreement. "I can help you." They spoke as one.

Harry smiled lightly. "Talk about your worst experiences. Tell me what you felt, show me how you felt."

"Let your magic flow, unleash it and let it run wild. Don't suppress anger, envy, resentment...let it control your magic." Tom tightened his arms around Harry not caring in the slightest when his bruises pained him.

"There was a time when I was young, maybe only five or six years old. I was given a letter addressed to me from my mother. She told me that she loved me and that my father despised me. She told me to never love for it will break your heart. At the very end of the letter she said that she sometimes wishes that she would live through if only to bask in the resemblance of my father and I. She died soon after I was born. It was long enough for her to write the letter. It hurt me even as a child that she didn't want to live to see me, Tom. She wanted to live so she could continue looking at my damnable father."

Magic coursed out through Tom's fingers sending flashes of colour through the shack. Harry watched in awe as the colours molded together like a kaleidoscope. The sheer power of the magic made Harry giddy. It was a spiritual high that made hairs stand on end. A shocked gasp escaped Harry as shots of magic burst out of Tom. The boy seemed less tense and distraught. His face still belayed tenseness.

Tom placed both hands on either side of Harry's face and stared deeply into his eyes. "Do you want to feel my shock?" He whispered breathlessly.

"Help me, help you." Harry said gently encouraging Tom to relax and set his emotions free.

Tom leaned forward and crushed his lips against Harry's. Through their lip lock emotions surged forward causing the smaller boy to arch in ecstasy. The emotions running through him were distress, anger and gratitude. These feelings merged with the volatile spontaneous, artless sensation which flowed through the shack caused tempestuous passion to course through their bodies. No emotion was held back, this was their freedom. This was their way to keep them sane.

Harry and Tom broke apart panting heavily from lack of oxygen. The colours began to seep back into Tom causing the boy to close his eyes and slacken. Harry leaned into Tom oddly at peace. Their techniques together had made an interesting effect. Neither Harry nor Tom thought about that though. Their minds were occupied about the kiss. Sapphire eyes met Emerald in an unsure stare.

"That was my first kiss." Harry softly said still staring at Tom.

"It was mine as well." Tom admitted.

"I'm only 11." Harry muttered not noticing the closing distance between their bodies.

"Does it matter?" Tom whispered before pressing his lips against Harry's once more.

It was a simple slightly open mouthed kiss. They were still young after all and had no experience in these matters. At the time though the two were content to do what instinct told them. If intimacy was a stress reliever then who were they to deny it? Harry pulled back his eyes half-lidded.

"Lily never beat me. James was always abusive. He wasn't one for blood and gore. No, James was the kind who liked to straightforwardly beat the shit out of me. Jamie never knew, she was always the innocent one who thought that I was hated and neglected. Abuse was never something she connected with me. My godfather didn't know and neither did his lover. Remus was the only one who cared. Then he stopped. I don't know why exactly but he just abruptly stopped. Sirius is close with James. He would follow him in a second even if it meant ignoring me."

Tom lightly grabbed Harry's hand. "We can help each other over time."

Harry stared at his hand in sadness as it began to fade. Tom quickly pulled him into a kiss. "I'll miss you."

Harry hugged Tom. His lower half faded. "I'll miss you too"

:End Dream:

"Harry?" Draco whispered shaking the boy slightly.

"Draco?" Harry asked confused as his eyes cleared of sleep.

"Are you alright? I saw a bright light flash in here." The question swirled in mercury eyes.

Harry refrained from groaning. "I'm fine Draco. I can't explain what the light was but it seemed to have come from my dream."

"Alright Harry. I just want you to know that I'm your best friend and you're mine. If you need someone to talk to I'm here for you." Draco smiled slightly. "Go back to sleep. We have a few hours before we need to get up." Although his voice was unaffected Harry could sense Draco was hurt.

Draco had been so nice to him and he offered nothing in return. He realized that his friend worried about him. Trying to alleviate his fretting Harry grabbed Draco's wrist as he turned to leave.

"Draco, wait. I'm sorry. I just don't know how to express what I'm feeling. If you ever need someone to talk to, my ears are open." Smiling softly Harry hugged him before crawling underneath his covers once again.

"Night Harry."

"Good Night Drake." Harry softly replied.

Chapter 16

A Change of heart

It was the last day of holidays before the duo had to return to Hogwarts and Harry was in a daze. After packing he preferred to spend the remaining time thinking back to his dream of Tom.

Thoughts upon thoughts soared intrusively within the confines of Harry's mind; subconsciously slender fingers ran over red lips. The kisses were something to think about, the boy was very young, only 11 years old and yet he had been lip-locked with someone who might not even exist in present time. The theory was so confusing that Harry decided to avoid the issue if it arose.

The intimacy of the embrace was enough to share their power, their ambrosia. The magic that had flown between them was like an aphrodisiac. All stress, all pain, all negative emotions had simply dissipated. They had been replaced with euphoria that made them escalate to a new elevation.

It was wrong...yet...it was confusing. Harry would not, could not, portray a picture of rightness and wrongness. The world simply did not work that way. Nothing could be wrong yet right at the same time. That strange feeling of 'suitability' that people felt was the emotion often used in place of the mystification they truly suffered. Strange how the word, suffer, could not only depict pain but also uncertainty and hints of pleasure.

Age, gender, and timeline did not matter for Tom or Harry. The conflict was beyond that. Both boys had grown up abused in several ways but they still knew that intimacy should have more meaning than what they had experienced. Or at least that was what Harry thought.

The green-eyed boy did not entertain thoughts of love, but the feeling of lust or need should have been present. It was not. Perhaps it was because of his age and lack of puberty or perhaps it was because of a deeper, darker reason. The uncontrolled energy that had created a

kaleidoscope had indicated that it was something more. Harry felt oddly relieved that no emotional attachment had been shared. That would have created problems between the two boys. The ecstasy and exhilaration of the wild magic was alluring and for the moment Harry was quite happy with it.

Additionally, selfishly, Harry did not want to lose Tom's companionship either. The brooding teen had grown on him. "Oh Tom..." He spoke this in a faraway fashion thinking of his dear friend. Finally, in this godforsaken world there was someone he could turn to. It was a miracle but a delightful one.

The young wizard seemed not to have noticed the realistic eyes watching him from the small painting of a young boy. From behind the painting in a dark tunnel Draco watched as emotions flitted across his best friend's face. At the great poignant expressions Draco's worry grew for his companion. It made his head and heart ache unpleasantly. Still for the sake of Harry, the Malfoy heir watched diligently.

At the last moment, Draco was about to leave he froze. From within the room that Harry resided in a single name filled it. This one name echoed off the walls although it was spoken softly. A sharp indiscernible entity jabbed Draco in his bosom.

Tom.

Who was this Tom? Why was his name uttered so lovingly from those red lips that the blond had often enjoyed watching as they spoke? The question that plagued the boy the most reverberated throughout his mind. *Why had Harry not told him of this Tom?*

Rejection.

A feared emotion it was, nothing could compare to rejection. Heartbreak was often because of rejection; anger was often because of rejection. This one simple word, one emotion, was the cause of so much pain and trouble. Yet, there was no other word to describe the feeling that Draco experienced. Harry had left him to find friendship, companionship within another. Pitiful sadness exploited the use of

Draco's face as it settled itself into the skin. The young boy returned to his room, his mind awfully blank.

Harry's eyes opened slowly. He had been dozing, thinking, meditating for the last two hours. Things had been quiet, a bit too quiet. Curiosity filled the wizard as he wondered what Draco was up to. Usually the blond Slytherin would have interrupted his reflecting time before now. Breathing deeply in a state of relaxation Harry maneuvered his way into Draco's room.

A quick scan of the room made him frown. Draco was in the farthest corner of the room, sitting on a dark window seat. His pale head was turned away from Harry not noticing when the boy began to approach him. Harry for his part grew concerned seeing his best friend in such a state. Gently he placed his hand upon Draco's shoulder.

"Draco?"

The blond did not acknowledge him causing worry to flare within his psyche. Harry blanked his face of all emotion as he forcefully turned Draco to face him. The calm mask he had nearly broke in shards when he saw the pale pointed face. Draco's once serene features were marred with pain and gloom. His face was the epitome of sadness. Harry sat down next to him, his arched brows clenching in concern.

"What's wrong?" Calmly, gently Harry spoke in hopes of getting Draco to speak. His silence scared Harry. Alas, no words came forth causing the sprig of fear to elongate.

Harry tried once more. "Draco, please tell me what has you so upset?" Stormy grey eyes stared never seeming to hide their sorrow.

In desperation Harry drew his friend into an awkward hug. "Say something Drake, you're scaring me." He whispered memories of years past flooding his head.

:Flashback:

James Potter sneered down at the five year old. "How dare you try to corrupt your sister? We raised you better than that Harry. This will hopefully teach you to better learn to obey us."

Emerald eyes widened in fear. Harry winced as he was roughly shoved into a closet. James showed no remorse as he carefully locked the closet door. Harry whimpered in despair. The closet was large, there were no lights, no reassuring sounds, there was nothing. The darkness seemed to have a life of it's own as it circled Harry threateningly. A small flicker of light had the toddler swiveling around clumsily.

"Who's there?" He whispered. No answer was given. Shakily the petit boy raised a thumb to his mouth. It was a bad habit. His mummy had told him so many times that he was too old to suck his thumb. Yet, even as small as he was, Harry had noticed that she never scolded Jamie when she did it. A clang caused a terrified yelp to omit from trembling lips. The darkness was closing in on him.

"Daddy! Mummy!" He screeched in vain attempts as he backed into a corner of the closet.

"DADDY! Let me out! Please, I promise not to be bad!" Sobs wracked the boy's body. "MUMMY!" He gasped out sinking down the wall.

No words of comfort came forth from beyond the closet. No mummy, no daddy came to his rescue. They had left him in this sinister closet. They had left him to his doom. Harry still young in his years did not give up hope.

"MUMMY! Save me from the dark! Please! I won't be bad! NO MORE BAD BOY MUMMY! PLEASE!" Slender arms wrapped themselves tightly around equally thin calves. "Don't leave me mummy! Daddy, please! No more!"

No one heard, no one replied, no one cared. This began the newest thought of line within the youngest Potter. His parents did not care for him. His parents did not even love him. They would never be there for his accomplishments and if they were it would only be to scorn him.

He was much better off without their treacherous thoughts. One day in the future they would see. Harry Potter trembled violently in the shadowy closet, his eyes flowing with tears. It was in his nature to forgive nevertheless this was their last chance. And so with a resolved heart Harry cast out one last plea for help before succumbing to the darkness.

"Save me..."

With the fading of those words, the forgiveness that caressed his nature faded too.

:End Flashback:

Draco's eyes snapped back to reality when Harry stiffened. His eyes glazed over as if remembering something terrible. Draco shook the boy slightly. "Harry!" The Malfoy heir could do nothing but watch in horror as emotions flashed across the viridian gaze. Relief flooded through him and his previous sorrow rushed back as Harry regained his bearings.

The brunet seeing that Draco had snapped out of his frozen state hugged him close. Draco likewise embraced him. As much as the blond did not want to admit he had been frightened for his comrade.

"What was that?" Draco questioned lightly.

"Flashback..." Harry reluctantly admitted shivering slightly remembering the vision. After that day he had lost all faith in his biological parents.

Draco did not press the issue and for that Harry was grateful. Green eyes turned to grey. "Why are you upset?"

"I hear you whisper a name." Draco confessed. "It was purely by accident. I was just curious as to what you were doing." He felt guilty about lying to his friend.

"Why does that make you so miserable?" Harry was confused as loathe as he was to admit it.

“Why didn’t you tell me about Tom?” Draco asked. “Is he a friend? Is he your *best* friend?”

“I never saw a need to. Furthermore you are acting like a git Draco.” Realization flooded through Harry. Draco was jealous of Tom.

“You don’t have to be my friend if you don’t want to Harry.” Draco said icily.

Harry narrowed his eyes. “What is this about Draco?” He knew it exactly what it was about but Draco needed to come to grips with it himself.

“Are you no longer my friend?” Draco retorted bitterly.

The ebony-haired Slytherin sighed slightly. His face softened as he wrapped his arm around Draco’s shoulder. “Tom is my best friend.” Draco stiffened. Harry paid no attention and continued. “But you are also my best friend.” Surprise took place of the hurt. “I am allowed to have more than one best friend Draco.”

They sat in silence for a few minutes before a small feeble sound broke it. “I’m sorry Harry.”

“I’m sorry as well. I should have told you about Tom. Friends?”

“Best friends.” Draco leaned into Harry’s embrace.

An hour passed before they moved. Harry crossed his legs and reclined opposite of Draco on the window seat. The youngest Malfoy looked like he wanted to ask a question but was afraid to do so.

“What is it?” Asked Harry, his own interest peaked.

Draco hesitated. “How is it that you have accepted Slytherin so easily? You’re family although they did not care for you surely told you of the misdeeds of Slytherin. Why is it that you readily joined Slytherin? You didn’t mind my family, or my name. The Potters are the exact opposite of what you are. After living with them for decade you still show no signs of influence. Why?”

Harry winced slightly at the barge of questions. Draco saw this and bit his lip. He did not mean to sound as harsh as he did but the questions had been bothering him sporadically. It was time that he got some answers. Of course, Draco would respect Harry's wishes if he did not wish to divulge some of the information but it would be disappointing.

"When I was younger I tried my hardest to mold to their wishes. It was not enough, it was never enough." A bitter tinge had coated his tone. "After an incident when I was merely six years old I gave up. They did not notice my lack of attention in all things 'right'. Their lessons to Jamie only inspired my hatred for them.

"Hypocritical sods. Of course at that age I didn't know what the word hypocritical was, but I knew the meaning of it. My resolve to be the perfect son dispersed completely. From that point I did things as I saw fit. My ... family did not like what they saw. Punishments began and those were the hardest years of my life.

"Through them I learnt of the injustice in the world and I spent my time studying. All day, all night I would surrender my mind to the expanse of the Potter library. It was my only refuge within the manor. At a young age I suppose the fact that what they did to me contradicted what they said held much meaning over me. I never listened to them. I never took heart the words they spoke of good and evil. It infuriated them yet they learned not to notice. My mind had always been open towards issues. Often in my mind I've heard a voice. It has been there lurking since I was six years old. Its words never changed and it taught me truth. *There is no good or evil, there is power, and those too weak to seek it.*"

Draco shuddered slightly at the dark words behind the tale. Pity that rose up was squashed. Draco knew from his father that pity was never accepted by those of great power. Eventually the blond would stop feeling the emotion all together. Sympathy would take its place and with it would come great respect for those who suffer yet live.

Draco straightened slightly his eyes full of determination. "Fear not Harry, I won't let them take you again."

Harry simply smiled.

The holidays were over and it was time to return to Hogwarts. Currently Draco had returned to his room to fetch his journal. Harry waited patiently in the front hall with Lucius. Narcissa had bid the boys goodbye and hugged them. She had business of some sort to attend to and could not accompany them to the station.

The Malfoy patriarch cast a look towards the main staircase. Pursing his lips slightly he beckoned Harry towards himself. The petit boy walked forward silently. Lucius cast a silencing spell around them creating a small dome.

“When my son first announced that you would be spending the holidays with us, I was a tad annoyed but mostly indifferent. During your stay here I have observed you much more closely Harry. Your views on certain things remain unclear. I will not skirt around the issue. Your allegiance is to whom Harry?” A predatory glance was thrown his way. Harry found himself pinned down by the elder Malfoy’s gaze.

“My allegiance is to myself, Mr. Malfoy. I have no desire to join The Dark Lord as he has not given me incentive to. Neither is my allegiance to Dumbledore, the light side has time and time again been hypocritical and unjust.” His voice was flat.

An appreciative gleam was Harry’s reward. “We will discuss this further next time you visit.” Lucius removed the silencing ward.

Draco bounded down the stairs. He hugged his father quickly and grinned at Harry. The green-eyed boy understood the reason for this. As soon as they arrived at the station no emotions would be shown. Facades, sneers and smirks were the only visages allowed once outside one’s domain.

Lucius held out a portkey, face impassive, and eyes guarded. The portkey took them directly onto platform 9¾. Draco and Harry bid Lucius goodbye as they lifted their trunks onto the Hogwarts express.

It would have been a grueling chore had it not been for the feather light charms placed on them.

“Blaise and Theodore have probably arrived already. Let’s look for their compartment.” Walking briskly the two younger Slytherins walked to the back of the train. After minutes of searching they found the other two halves of their quartet.

“Blaise, Theo.” Harry inclined his head in greeting as he sat down next to Theodore. The quiet boy pulled out a book and began to show Harry the content.

Draco sat next to Blaise as both rolled their eyes. While all of the four were intelligent, only Harry and Theo really read much and discussed theories and whatnot. Theo babbled incoherently about a Transfiguration theory in his animagus. Grey and Teal eyes widened at the speed of the words. Neither could understand a thing the boy said but it seemed from the attentive look on Harry’s face he comprehended and analyzed every word.

At last Theo stopped talking and turned calculating eyes onto Harry who tilted his head to the side slightly. “I completely agree of course. The membrane is much too delicate to go through the procedure that rapidly. Our innards would not be able to respond. They would contort and mutilate in our very bones. Furthermore the marrow would be liquefied within transformation and as a werewolf it would be painful. A trip to St. Mungo’s and much scarring would be the result.”

Blaise dropped his head on Draco’s shoulder pitifully. “Ouch.” Draco gulped pressing further into his seat.

An amused look passed between Theodore and Harry. Grey eyes narrowed when Theo slid closer to Harry and propped the book between both. Heads bent together the two studious boys began reading their eyes contracted in thought.

The train ride was relaxing and somewhat boring for the boys. Over the course of the ride they had read the heavy tomes that were their animagus books. At times the book was dull at others exciting. Coincidentally they finished five minutes prior to arrival. Hogwarts hummed with magic as students entered her halls. She seemed

overly pleased now that her rooms were filled with pupils and chatter. With buoyant thoughts and attitudes a new semester began.

Blaise and Theodore announced that they had to visit Althea and Khoy, their owls. Draco bid them goodbye meanwhile Harry secured his trunk with a quick Wingardium Leviosa. The two Slytherins quickly walked down the halls, intent on getting to the common room. Just as Draco was about to round a corner Harry pulled him back. Seconds later Jamie, Ron, and Hermione stepped into an alcove. Being hidden they could see clearly what the younger Potter was showing her friends.

It was an old ratty bit of parchment. Upon examination no words or illustrations marred the surface. Jamie grinned widely. "Daddy got me this for Christmas. It's the Marauder's map. Isn't it brilliant?" Jamie must have told Ronald and Hermione of its uses because she did not demonstrate its power for which Harry was grateful.

A wicked light pervaded grey eyes. Draco smirked. Once the Gryffindor golden trio had left the blond turned to Harry. "We must steal that map."

Harry nodded contemplatively. "It would be a good investment. James spoke of the map to Jamie once. He did not know I was in the room. The words are as she said and the map will do us much good. It is a very concise map. Not only does it show all of Hogwarts but it also shows who is where within Hogwarts."

"It's a good thing that Potter didn't demonstrate." Draco mumbled as they continued on their way to the Slytherin Common Room.

What they did not hear in the remainder of Jamie's conversation with her friends was that she had also gained an invisibility cloak courtesy of her father.

Draco retold of their discovery to Blaise and Theodore who listened raptly. Blaise spoke first as soon as Draco finished. "Imagine how much of Hogwarts we could explore with this map."

This sentence brought up the incident before the holidays. Harry could not think of anything else but the mirror he had encountered that late night and its visage. Resolutely Harry decided that he would revisit the mirror once again that very night.

Silently Harry crept out of his shared room with Draco. It took a while before Harry could find the room again. His memory was slightly fogged over time, although it had only been a few weeks. When the boy finally saw the correct door he frowned. While he did want to look into the mirror he was afraid as well. The shadowed surface, the dark feelings, the macabre attitude of the mirror frightened him to the core.

Gradually Harry made his way in front of the mirror. It took a few minutes to register that what he saw was not the same he saw previously. Instead of the empty darkness and the negative emotions, the picture depicted for him was one of happiness and peace. There in the mirror stood slightly aged versions of himself, Draco, Lucius, Narcissa, Severus and surprisingly Tom.

Mirror Harry looked to be 5'7, his hair was the same wavy locks but they reached his shoulders. Green eyes had aged; in their depths lay wisdom, love and confidence. Draco had likewise grown to a respectable height of 5'10. His pointed features had softened his eyes grey, sharp and intelligent. Both boys looked to be 15 years old. They held a deep love which made Harry's heart ache.

Narcissa and Lucius looked as they were now. Their platinum locks cascaded down their backs. Lucius' stopped at his shoulder blades, while Narcissa's rested in a loose braid at her hips. Severus looked much healthier and over all nicer. His face rested in an easy smile which brightened his features considerably. The black hair was not greasy and rested neatly above his shoulders. Coal-black eyes shone

with an odd look which could be interpreted as happiness and love. This too made Harry's heart ache albeit differently.

And last but not least was Tom. He no longer looked like a boy. His face had aged considerably and he looked to be 30 years old. Ebony hair fell in light ringlets and waves around his shoulders framing a narrow pale face. Gone were the azure eyes that he had when he was younger, replaced with exotic crimson eyes. They pierced Harry's soul in a way none others had. Tom looked to be about 6'3 being taller than all but Severus in the mirror. Severus and Tom stood at the same height, while Lucius stood only half an inch shorter than them. Narcissa followed at 5'8.

Standing together they were all touching in some way. His eyes briefly caught an inscription at the top of the frame. Furrowing his brow the sable-haired boy wrote it down on a scrap piece of parchment using a broken quill from the classroom. The parchment was carefully placed into one of the pockets in his robe as Harry turned his attention to the mirror yet again. It warmed Harry's heart and the longer he stood there staring at the picture, the more he thought that this mirror was dark. It took much effort but Harry reluctantly left the room.

Hurriedly once back in his room he opened his journal. Theo, Blaise and Draco would not be awake now but if they woke the question would be there. Dipping his ebony quill into ink he wrote a single note in the journal before closing it.

(To all from Harry) Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi. What does it mean?

The next day all four boys had read of the message. Their minds were pre-occupied throughout their classes. The message was there but the four had no time to actually analyze it and so it was pushed to the rear of their minds. During Lunch Theo suddenly smirked.

"I believe I have found out what your message says. It says 'I show not your face but your hearts desire.'"

Absentmindedly Harry bit his lip. "It sounds like the Mirror of Erised."

"The fabled mirror? Where did you find this puzzle?" Theo looked at Harry perplexedly.

"It was in an old text book. However much I tried to figure it out there was no forthcoming answer except deciphering what the riddle was. Thank you Theodore." Suspicious glances were thrown at the orphaned boy during lessons but the subject had been abandoned.

Making up his mind Harry decided to research more about the aforementioned mirror. Under the pretense of needing to study, Harry left his friends in order to head to the library. After three hours of searching under Madam Pince's watchful gaze led the boy to nothing.

Harry walked slowly towards the Slytherin common room. His head was whirling with theories. None gave the slightest indication that they were truthful. It seemed as if he had gone in circles.

I show not your face but your hearts desire.

The second viewing of the mirror made sense. But the first left questions. That feeling of despair and the empty shade did nothing to alleviate his fears. What did he desire the first time that had made the mirror into such a monstrosity? He wished there was someone he could talk to.

Harry trusted no one with the information of the mirror except Draco and Severus. He knew it would be pointless to discuss this information with the blond. It would only cause worry and no plausible explanations. But...Severus on the other hand could very well be the

answer to his problems. After all Harry had already told him of the mirror.

Stride set in fortitude; Harry changed pace and made his way towards Severus' personal quarters. Harry stopped in front of the blank portrait. Now that he was thinking a bit clearly the emptiness of the frame confused him. Shrugging slightly he knocked, silently praying that Severus was there.

Luck was on his side. The empty painting swung back as Severus stepped out. He looked at Harry disapprovingly but allowed the boy inside. Harry sat down in an armchair near the fireplace. For the first time he had a good look at Severus' personal chambers. The walls were decorated in a dark green, almost black. The room itself was sparse. A few armchairs littered the room, an organized desk, and two bookshelves. There were neither carpets nor any pictures. There was no homey feeling to the room, but there was a feeling of security. Harry decided he liked this room with its simplicity.

A soft cough interrupted his wandering eyes from their investigation. Severus looked slightly amused as he sat down in another armchair. With a wave of his wand two cups of steaming tea appeared. Harry appreciatively took one. "Thank you sir."

"What brings you here at such a late time?"

"I went back to the mirror." Harry whispered eyes downcast. He couldn't bear to see disappointment in those fathomless eyes.

A soft sad sigh startled him causing green eyes to lock with black. "What did you see this time?"

Harry smiled slightly at what he saw. His voice was oddly passionate as he spoke of the illustration the mirror had created for him. Severus had even smiled minimally at the description. Relief was evident in his eyes but Harry did not question it.

"Do you know what the mirror is?" Severus asked carefully sipping his tea.

Harry likewise took a small sip cautious as to not burn his tongue. "It is the Mirror of Erised."

Severus nodded approvingly. "Do you know why it is that the first time that you looked the same entities did not appear?"

Harry negatively shook his head. "No Severus. That is why I came to you."

Severus settled back into his armchair finishing off the last of his tea. He dismissed the cup absentmindedly. "The Mirror of Erised shows your hearts desire. The happiest man could look into it as see everything as it was. The man who longs for love could see his future spouse and family. The man who longs for nothing, who has no desire will see nothing. The mirror works to show your **hearts** desire. The man whose heart beats for nothing will be shown his heart. That is what you saw Harry. With no desire coursing within you, the mirror took a different approach. It had shown you the conflict within your heart."

They sat in silence as Harry tried to digest what he had been told. It was a horrifying thought that his heart had once felt like that. That moment had not been so long ago either. Overwhelming respite coursed through his veins. No longer was he stared of desire, no longer was his heart doomed to such pain. Harry smiled slightly. Severus took this as indication that he could continue.

"When you first told me of your viewing I was...shocked, alarmed and troubled. You are but a child Harry and what you described was analogous to what I saw twenty years ago. I too was only 11 years of age at the time. The headmaster had described to me exactly as I have told you. I do not know why the Mirror of Erised is once again in this castle, perhaps it never left. But it pleases me to hear that you now have a desire."

To say Harry was shocked was an understatement. He kept his silence though and contemplated what Severus had said. If Severus had been eleven, twenty years ago then he must be only 31 years of age. It made sense. This also meant that Severus had been in the same year as his biological parents.

"We are more alike than I thought." Severus spoke softly his eyes piercing Harry's forehead until the boy was forced to look up. In the potions master's gaze he saw protectiveness that only a parent or guardian would have. It warmed the chill in Harry's bones.

Harry longed to hug the man for everything he had done. Severus saw this and opened his arms slightly in invitation. Harry smiled shyly and inched into his hold. Coal-eyes thawed from their bitter cold state. The brunet Slytherin bit his lip slightly. This hold was different from the hugs he shared with Draco. With Draco he felt comfort and dare he say it ... love. In Severus' arms he felt secure, loved and wanted. It was how he imagined hugging a parent would feel.

"It's late. I will escort you back to bed." Severus rose deftly.

Harry nodded and stepped outside the rooms. Once the portrait closed Harry's previous question came back to him.

"Severus?"

Severus arched a brow. Harry looked at the painting. "Shouldn't an entrance have a guardian?"

Severus smirked but Harry did not see. His eyes were glued to the canvas. A beautiful woman in her mid-thirties faded into the picture. Her raven locks cascaded down her back and down to her thighs. She wore an old-fashioned navy dress robe which circled her petite waist tightly. A corset encircled her torso making her pastel skin stand out. Her eyes were like Severus'. They held a depth in them that would drown even the best of swimmers. Her lips held a small amused smile as she peered at Harry.

"The best guardian is an unseen one, child." Her voice was slightly deep in a feminine way which made her appearance even grander.

Harry smiled slightly, liking the playful nature the woman permeated. "Forgive me ma'am. May I ask what your name may be?"

"You may, it is Cyrinne Prince."

“You are related.” Harry acknowledged politely. Severus nodded.
“She is my grandmother from my mother’s side.”

“It is gratifying to be approved by your presence Madam Prince.”
Harry bowed his head slightly. He knew of the wizarding customs. Remus when he had paid attention had taught him the basics. Over the years he had studied more into the customs. It was fascinating to learn of things his sister would not know nor learn willingly.

“And you as well young serpent.”

Severus nodded to his grandmother in dismissal. He smiled slightly at Harry before they resumed their journey to the Slytherin dorms. Both snakes felt much happier and with a lighter heart they rested, surrendering to their dreams of pleasantry.

Chapter 17

Tagalong Mistakes

The days that flew past turned to weeks and those weeks turned to months. It was now May and the end of the year finals were upon the students of Hogwarts. Every student could be seen studying for their exams. The Ravenclaws had locked themselves in the Ravenclaw common room during their free time in order to study. Rumor had it that their common room had its own extensive library.

The Hufflepuffs had taken to huddling together in large study groups offering each other help in certain subjects. The Gryffindors wandered to the library and sat outside in pairs and trios as they bent their heads together to read from thick texts. The Slytherins however broke off into individuals. Most studied on their own and simply asked other students for help if it was necessary.

Tutors in Slytherin had been announced for the year. Of course these student tutors were not volunteering. No, they were stuck in their troublesome situation simply because they had been the students to lose Slytherin house the most points throughout the year. Needless to say, these students were far from stupid. Slytherins took pride in being intelligent except for the occasional few. And so even these troublemakers were intellectual enough to help younger students who asked for assistance. It was an ingenious system really.

Speaking of systems, Harry, Draco, Blaise and Theodore had devised their own. Currently they lay side by side on Harry's enlarged four poster bed. Each boy had a different text book in their left hand while they took down notes with their opposite hands in their journals. This would cut their studying time down. All they would need to do once all the information was recorded was simply open up their journals and study from them. It was mutually benefiting for the quartet. They worked steadily for hours summarizing notes, texts and information which had already packed itself into their brains.

It was with a great sigh of relief when they had at last completed their tasks. The headings in the journals had been written neatly and in a structured fashion. This would be handy later on after all.

Great bouts of tension strummed through the air as May turned to June and the exams finally began. The Slytherins as expected did not show their exhaustion, frustration nor their anxiety as they took their examinations. When the day came for the final tests to take place even the Slytherins couldn't hide their relief. The sooner they took them the sooner they would be over.

Harry smirked slightly as he completed repotting a small twig of devil's snare. He used great caution and kept his hands near the top of the stalk. This would cause less agitation to run throughout the plant and perhaps keep it from attacking for a short while. It would also protect the devil's snare from the brightly burning sun above the greenhouses. As the emerald eyed boy fulfilled his task he wiped small beads of sweat from his forehead. Without hesitation Harry quickly removed his hands from the plant and held the pot tightly between both hands.

The stalk began to writhe dangerously whipping its 5-inch body from side to side. Harry hurried to the front of the greenhouse and carefully labeled it with his name. Smiling faintly at his accomplishment he lowered the plant into a dark, damp alcove which Professor Sprout had made. Once the magical fauna was out of the way Harry gathered his books and left the greenhouse nodding to Professor Sprout on his way out. He would wait for his friends in the Slytherin common room. Blaise already having completed repotting his devil's snare had probably reached the Slytherin common room by now.

The overhead sun shone brilliantly heating the grounds terribly. The giant squid could be seen treading barely above the surface of the lake. A sharp movement caught Harry's eye as he stared towards the lake. Involuntarily his eyes snapped to a tall hunched figure on a broomstick. It was speeding away from Hogwarts towards Hogsmede.

A quick squint of his eyes confirmed that the figure was indeed Headmaster Dumbledore.

Harry could not suppress the widening of his eyes. All thoughts, theories and concerns of the Philosopher's stone flooded his mind. He had to see Severus. Harry briskly walked towards the castle not noticing the patter of feet behind him. It took all of his concentration not to jump when Draco grabbed his arm.

"Wait up Harry." The blond looked back at the rushing figure of Theodore.

When the round-faced boy had caught up with them Harry launched into an explanation for his hurried steps. By the time he finished both had replicated the wide-eyed look that had been on the sable haired boy's face only minutes ago.

"We have to talk to Severus." Harry whispered.

Draco shook his head. "No we can't. He already knows and if we say anything I know for a fact that Sev will lock us in our rooms.

"We have to go down the trap door tonight." Theodore concluded.

They hurried off to the Slytherin common room intent on informing Blaise of their plans. Once that was out of the way they would simply have to wait for the time to come. Slytherin training would have to be put in use so that the quartet would look inconspicuous. Severus would eventually come and check up on Harry and Draco and in turn Blaise and Theodore.

Theodore quickly got Blaise from his perch next to a chess match. Two third years frowned in concentration as they continued making their moves. Even one with the littlest experience in chess could see that both these students were very skilled in chess. Blaise made a protesting sound as he was hauled out of the chair and into his and Theo's room.

The décor was exactly the same as Harry and Draco's room, except for the color of the bed sheets. Theo's sheets were a nice midnight blue and Blaise's were an odd bronze. Blaise opened his mouth to

speak but fell silent at the grave faces of his friends. Theodore rapidly explained what had occurred to him. The willowy Italian wizard fell back on his bed with a sigh.

Green and Grey eyes met. Silent communication of a sort was going on between the two. A look of understanding and comprehension lit up their faces for a brief second.

"Theodore, Blaise you must stay here." Harry said this in an emotionless voice.

"What?" Blaise shot off the bed. "No! We aren't letting you guys go alone."

"We need you here just incase we need you to call Dumbledore or Severus." Harry explained further perching himself on the end of Theo's bed.

At the puzzled looks Draco elaborated. "Harry and I will keep our journals with us in case."

"As loathe as I am to admit it, your idea makes sense." Theo grumbled.

"Theo! Not you too! I can't believe you'd let them go alone like that!" Blaise was obviously still very ticked off.

Rolling his eyes Theo pulled the older boy in a light one armed embrace to stop his pacing. "Blaise listen, we are helping them much more this way. If we all went down there without anyone knowing and we needed a Professor's help then what would we do?" It was a rhetorical question.

The impact of the question however hit Blaise in the head like a bludger. "Damn you Theodore."

A smug smirk threatened to overtake the mousy-haired boy's lips. Blaise saw this and narrowed his eyes. "Oh sod off you bloody git."

"Language Zabini." Draco reprimanded lightly rummaging through Blaise's trunk. It was ill-mannered but they all knew that Blaise would

have given him permission anyway and this was a time that politeness could be forgone.

After minutes of delving Draco emerged from the trunk. His hair was slightly ruffled and his expression was one of distaste.

“One would think that as the son of dark parents you would have the sense to carry around a dark detector. And don’t bother telling me you don’t know what I’m taking about. Mother told me for a fact that the Zabini family has their own modified dark detector.”

Seeing Harry’s confused look Draco explained further. “Pureblooded families usually have a modified dark detector. Usually it is personalized so that it reacts around everyone except their certain family. Theo and I both have one. Blaise here should have one as well but his seems to be missing.”

Theo absently tucked his hair behind his ear as he pulled out his own detector. “You can use this one. It’s a bit old but I expect it will work just fine.” It was a mirror of a sort but it had been minimized for compatibility.

“Thanks.” Harry carefully placed the small mirror into the inside pocket of his robe. Just as he was about to a faded figure appeared in the mirror.

The figure was grey showing that the person was not close enough to be considered a threat but that they were coming closer. Knowing that Slytherin house was full of dark people Harry quickly alerted his friends to act casual. After all, this could end up being Severus. Shoving the mirror back into his pocket Harry ended up leaning against the headboard of the bed sharing a book with Theo.

The page they were on was quite interesting however and a fast-paced discussion began to take place between the two. Blaise and Draco rolled their eyes. As Blaise yawned widely the door was opened to reveal Severus. He took one look at the boys casting suspicious glances as both Draco and Harry then left.

The boys did not move from their positions until it was time to leave. Harry silently walked into his own dorm to gather his and Draco’s

journals. Waving his wand over his head Harry disillusioned himself as he met up with his friend. Draco seeing what Harry had done had also placed a disillusionment charm over himself.

“Hold hands.” Draco whispered to Harry. “We might get lost otherwise.”

Harry nodded and felt around for Draco’s hand. Slim digits wrapped around his own fingers in a comforting grip. Unnecessarily Harry smiled at the place where Draco stood. Although the blond could not see it, he could feel it. He smiled back reassuringly. Together they left the common rooms steadily making their way to the third floor corridor.

It would have been an easier journey had they not come across Jamie, Hermione and Ron on their way there. The large wooden door that led to Fluffy was closed and locked. It seemed as if they did not know how to get past the Cerberus. The trio was quite a bit away from the door and would not notice if Harry and Draco slipped in. Both boys opened the door quickly to avoid any creak before jumping into the room. Unfortunately Jamie Potter did indeed see the door open and close on its own accord while her two best friends began arguing. Jamie narrowed her hazel eyes and crept away from the duo and into the room. What she saw there was a shocking sight.

Harry and Draco had disillusioned themselves and were opening the trap door. Fluffy lay off to the side asleep from the gentle lull of a lullaby. It came from nowhere yet filled the room with its peaceful tune. The two boys did not notice her figure as she stood in the shadows dumbly watching the beast. What did get her attention was that when Draco jumped after Harry the lullaby stopped and so did Fluffy’s snores. She screamed as the dog growled before jumping down the trap door.

Harry looked at Jamie in shock. He did not realize exactly what he had landed in when he had heard the youngest Potter’s scream. Draco who was hopeless at Herbology did not notice either that thick vines had begun creeping up around him. After a particularly hard tug Harry looked down.

“Get off!” He yelled. “It’s devil’s snare!”

Jamie was the only one lucky enough to get off the plant. A single vine strapped itself around her ankle but she was able to pull away. Her face paled as she took in the calm composed figured of the Slytherins who were close to being strangled by the vicious plant.

“Light a fire.” Harry spoke calmly his eyes meeting hers.

Jamie fumbled as she thought of the incantation. Her father had taught her this one when she was 10 years old. Smiling triumphantly the redhead raised her wand.

“Incendio!”

Draco sighed in relief as the plant withered away from their bodies. He had only remembered the basics of devil’s snare after the Herbology exam. Although they had been given small twigs they were nothing compared to the masses of vines that now snapped at their back as they rushed into the next room.

Before they proceeded any further Harry turned to look at Jamie. His face was impassive but his eyes were cold. “Leave.”

“I’m the girl-who-lived Harry. I won’t leave so you can steal the stone!” Her shrill voice was back and her nose was upturned once again.

“We don’t have time for this.” Draco harshly whispered in his ear. Luckily Jamie did not hear for she was concentrating on the sound of wings overhead.

Harry nodded at Draco. They too turned their heads upward to look at the assorted birds in the air. Harry narrowed his eyes. “They’re keys.”

Draco pinched his nose. “Flitwick I suppose. No spell will probably let us through that door, only the key will.” He examined the doorknob. “It’ll be a heavy silver one.”

There were two brooms only. Harry hurriedly took one while Draco took the other. Simultaneously they took off. The keys rushed towards them nicking them as they flew around looking for the key

that would lead them to the other room. Draco winced as he was jabbed in the ribs. A broken-winged key hung in front of him. As his hand shot out to catch the blasted thing, it moved.

Harry however was below him and easily caught it. Harry threw the key to Jamie. "Open the door!"

She sprinted across the room and thrust the key in. After a few seconds the door clicked open. Jamie did not wait for the two Slytherins before rushing into the next room. Harry jumped off his broom about a meter high and pulled open the door. Draco soared through, directly followed by Harry.

As the door slammed shut behind them torches which lined the walls flared brightly with flames. Jamie gasped. Harry cast a look towards Draco who nodded. They both knew that Draco was a far better chess player than the brunet.

"We have to take the place of the pieces." Jamie spoke in a hushed voice.

She cautiously touched a castle. It jumped up and hobbled to the side of the board leaving an unoccupied space. Draco glared.

"You fool. Take the place of the castle since you seemed so adamant on touching it." He snarled.

His grey eyes gleamed with anticipation of a challenge. "Harry take the place of the bishop."

He did as he was told and saw that Draco had replaced the knight to his left. Once they had secured their places a white piece from the opposite side moved. Smirking, the blond began to play issuing orders with the command of a true Malfoy. The moves were flawless but the desperation to win lingered in the air. They had two moves left. One black piece was at check. The black side would win...but, only if Draco sacrificed himself. Viridian eyes widened. Harry pulled out his journal and scribbled a note quickly into it.

(To Draco from Harry) Draco. The check!

A small smile tugged at the pointed face. *(To Harry from Draco) I know Harry. But, if the queen decided to move we're as good as dead.*

Harry simply winked. After a quick unsure glance Draco commanded Jamie, the castle to move to the left four spaces. She did as she was told surprisingly.

"Check." Draco's voice rang loudly in the room.

The king shifted its range out of the check. This move however left it open to be checkmated by Draco. The Slytherin wizard moved quickly. He smirked triumphantly as he reached his destination.

"Checkmate."

At first nothing happened but then the sounds of creaking metal filled the room. It echoed eerily. Confused glances were thrown about before they realized it was the sword of the king. In awed engrossment three pairs of eyes could not help but watch at the giant 5 foot sword fell to the floor with a clang. The reality of what was happening struck them in full force.

The trio moved quickly into the next room. Jamie was ignored by Harry and Draco as she tagged along. Both boys knew it would be futile trying to get her to go back. Nothing would stop the persistent little brat. One thing that the Slytherin duo learned about Jamie was that she wasn't as incompetent as they had thought. The girl obviously had some practice in advance magic. Although the Burning spell was only second year material, it showed that the girl knew more than she let on.

Draco and Harry resolved to keep a closer eye on the slightly chubby redhead. She could prove to be dangerous after all. Harry knew his sister wasn't completely stupid. When they had been young James had taught her a few spells and she had picked them up quite fast. Defense Magic seemed to be her strength while the other subjects were weaknesses. Jamie was not completely terrible in those classes, except potions. Her grades were a little above 60 overall. With the

right bit of studying Jamie could prove to be more powerful than they thought.

This frightened Harry considerably. It was not that he was scared of her. But if Jamie grew powerful she might end up losing control of her magic, or using it for blood magic. Say if Harry wanted to hide for a while. It could not happen because Jamie would be able to use the twin connection along with some spells to find Harry. Unless Harry was adopted he would be available to Jamie's viewing of him. It was unlucky that even though he was disowned his blood was still blood of a Potter. Such things like blood magic would work unless he was purged.

Purging was usually only used during adoption. Many witches and wizards adopted a child then fed them a potion which magically and physically sealed the contract. The child would gain some attributes and a sometimes even a change of personality. Personality is hardly ever altered and even if it is there is minimal modification.

Now however was not the time to think of that. Now was the time to move on to the next task.

Draco, Jamie and Harry gagged at the smell. The Slytherins hid their repulsion showing only slight disdain while Jamie gagged violently. Smirking the two boys walked past the dead troll without as much as a blink. Jamie stumbled across the room using her hands to cover her nose.

Quirrell had obviously prepared this task and he had easily defeated it. Draco was glad he didn't need to fight this troll. Unlike the one Harry had defeated this one was a full grown troll. The amount of power it would take to kill it would have exhausted them and left them vulnerable. He spoke of only Harry and himself. It didn't matter to him if the Gryffindor chit got herself murdered. She was after all the girl-who-lived, the chosen one, the golden girl. *It wouldn't do to die before she killed Lord Voldemort again.* This thought dripped with sarcasm and Draco had to repress a chuckle.

Of course, Draco kept these opinions to himself. He wasn't sure whether the Gryffindors knew of Voldemort's return nor did he want them to know. It would only give the dark side a boost if the announcement of his lord's return was delayed.

Harry had noticed Draco's pensive expression. He did not make a move to disrupt the blond and he did not question him. If whatever Draco had been thinking wanted to be known Harry would hear it in due time. Grasping the door handle of the next door he pulled it open with a sharp jerk and stepped in.

As Jamie and Draco entered the room flames erupted behind them sealing the path. The opposite door on the other side of the room also had flames barricading the path forward. The only difference between the flames was that the ones in front of the door leading forward were black. While the flames surrounding the door leading back were purple. They were stuck it seemed. Harry smiled very, very faintly when he saw the bottles of potions. This was definitely Severus'. Draco's smirk indicated that he too knew. Jamie scrunched up her face.

"I bet this is Snape's. It was probably easy for him to get past this one." Her voice was whiny yet hushed.

Harry moved forward and snatched up a roll of parchment. Carefully he unfolded it and read the message out loud.

Danger lies before you, while safety lies behind,

Two of us will help you, whichever you would find,

One among us seven will let you move ahead,

Another will transport the drinker back instead,

Two among our number hold only nettle wine,

Three of us are killers, waiting hidden in line.

*Choose, unless you wish to stay here forever more,
To help you in your choice, we give you these clues four:
First, however slyly the poison tries to hide
You will always find some on nettle wine's left side;
Second, different are those who stand at either end,
But if you would move onwards, neither is your friend;
Third, as you see clearly, are all different in size,
Neither dwarf nor giant holds death in their insides;
Fourth, the second left and the second on the right
Are twins once you taste them, though different at first sight.*

Identical smiles broke out on Harry's and Draco's faces. Jamie did not notice as she was staring at the potions her face the quintessence of confusion. Draco waited patiently as Harry began to decipher the code. Severus had always been the ever logical one from the older wizards he had met. This puzzle showed exactly how intelligent he was. Hardly any wizards or witches held a speckle of logic within their minds.

Harry who had always been interested in riddles had found them to be a pleasant source of conversation with Severus. Draco although not completely hopeless was not altogether that great with puzzles and riddles. He could manage but it would take him much longer than it would take Harry.

"Got it." He spoke breaking Draco out of his reflection.

"Which one will let us forward?"

Harry pointed to the smallest potion bottle. Jamie hearing this darted forward and drank a gulp before rushing through the door with the black fire. Draco cursed. There was only a few drops left of the potion. Only one of them could go onwards.

“Go back and tell Severus everything Draco.” Harry pushed a round bottle into the blond’s hand.

Draco nodded seeing that it made sense. He downed the bottle and hugged Harry tightly. “Be careful.” With that he rushed out through the purple fire.

Harry took a deep breath before consuming the rest of the potion. Cold liquid ice spread through him. Harry plunged into the fire and found that it licked warmly at his skin. Setting his body into a stoic poise he opened the door and stepped through into the awaiting room.

Draco rushed through the next room completely ignoring the pungent odor of the deceased troll. He smiled in relief when he saw that the chess set although having moved back to their original positions let him by easily. As he neared the door with the keys his sharp grey eyes spotted a broom. He had almost forgotten about the broom being left here.

Steeling himself Draco grabbed the broom and yanked open the door. The keys however did not rush at him. With careful examination he saw that once again a key would be needed to open the door leading to the exit. Smirking triumphantly Draco raced around the keys on the broom gaining a few nicks. He trapped a small silver gold key and snatched it out of the air.

Misusing no time he jabbed the key into the lock and hurried through the door as it opened. His heart beat wildly in relief that he had managed to escape the room.

His heart did not slow down when he saw that the devil’s snare had repaired itself. The vines seemed to notice a familiar presence for their once calm branches began snapping at the first year. Draco mounted his broom and flew upwards till he was near the ceiling. Faintly he could make out the trap door. It had sealed itself. Bracing himself with one hand the blond pulled out his wand.

“Alohomora!” The trap door moved upwards slightly.

Draco did not look down as he flew with great speed out of the chamber. The trap door burst open startling Fluffy. Draco did not stop to battle the dog. He dropped the broom and ran out of the room locking the door behind him.

By the time he got to Professor Snape’s chambers his breath came out in hearty pants. Shakily he knocked on the portrait. The door burst open. Severus looked at Draco with barely concealed fury.

“Harry is still down there.”

Draco nodded pathetically. “Potter is too.” He managed to get out before collapsing next to the portrait.

“Go inside and stay there.” Severus snapped before running down the halls. Draco crawled inside, his legs too shaky for him to stand. *We are in so much trouble* he thought.

Severus sprinted down the dark halls of Hogwarts his mind working overtime. *It was foolish of me to think that self-preservation would have stopped them* Severus contemplated angrily. He did not register another figure running in the same direction he was until he crashed into that figure. Thin lips parted to snap at the offender when they caught sight of a silver beard.

“Headmaster! We must go down the trap door.” The potions master did not get to continue as Dumbledore waved his hand for silence.

“I realized on my way to the ministry that I had been fooled. The place where I was needed the most was the very same place that I had vacated. Let us go quickly. I fear we do not have much time.”

The first this Harry saw was that Jamie was unconscious. She lay next to a tall mirror. At a second glance he realized that it was the mirror of Erised. Next to the mirror stood Quirrell. Harry wondered why Voldemort still remained covered by the turban.

"Hello Professor." Harry spoke calmly walking leisurely towards the professor. His wand slipped into his hand as he neared the man.

"You." He hissed. Quirrell sneered. "Your foolish sister thought she could stop me. My master will reward me greatly for killing you both."

Harry mock frowned. "Now that isn't very nice. I must have a word with your master."

Quirrell did not acknowledge his words and instead chose to push in front of the mirror using magic. Harry did not show his surprise but instead looked into the mirror. He was shocked not to find the picture he had seen before. It was even more shocking to realize that the reflection depicted not him but Tom.

The mirror Tom reached into his pocket and pulled out a blood red stone. Smirking he winked before placing the stone back into the pocket. Harry vaguely felt something heavy drop into his pocket.

"What do you see boy?" Quirrell growled.

"I see a boy." Harry spoke truthfully.

A new voice spoke this time. "I wish to speak to him face to face."

"Mas...master you are not strong enough." Quirrell stuttered his voice laced with pain.

"Do as I say!" The voice acquired a high pitch.

Trembling stocky hands reached up and unwrapped the turban skillfully. It seemed as if the man although scared had enough practice to do so easily. The cloth fell away and Quirrell turned around. Voldemort's hideous face stretched over the back of his head. Harry could not hide his grimace. There was a stinging pain in his

scar. It was not unbearable which might have meant that Voldemort did not wish to kill him yet.

“Harry, we meet again.”

Harry inclined his head slightly. Questions burst forth internally. Voldemort seemed to sense this. “Speak your mind.”

Harry avoided looking into his red eyes. It hurt more to look directly into them. “Why did Quirrell attack me during the Quidditch match? Neither of you knew that I was the prophecy child at that time.”

The thin lips formed what you could call a smirk. “Clever boy. I had Quirrell attack you simply because you were proving to be too much of a nuisance, especially after you knocked out the troll. Now, why don’t you give me that stone in your pocket?”

“And if I do? What will become of me? What will I gain by giving you the stone?” Harry saw no point of beating around the bush.

“I will let you live for one. Perhaps when you are older I can enlist you in my services. I could make you powerful. I could give you the Potters on a silver platter.” Voldemort’s crimson gaze bore into Harry’s emerald gaze.

“I do not wish to be a servant for you. That would be no better than helping Dumbledore.”

Voldemort outright grinned at this. “Clever, very clever. I see much potential in you Harry. Perhaps in that case you could join me as a partner. As a being equal to myself. I would train you and teach you the ways of the dark. I would make you great.”

Harry thought this over. He knew if he refused that he would die. But if he agreed then Voldemort would live and he would gain freedom from Dumbledore’s watch. Harry nodded sharply his ebony hair falling into his eyes. Voldemort used Quirrell’s body to perform a silent charm over Jamie. Curiosity welled within Harry but he did not question the spell. Time was running short and Dumbledore would show up soon. As he reached into his pocket and withdrew the stone

Jamie awoke. She did not see the stone but she did see Voldemort and Quirrell.

The Potter heir screamed and stood abruptly. She swiveled to look at Harry who had already masked his face into a fearful look. Jamie stepped backwards towards the door. Quirrell was having none of that. He raised his wand and cast a spell. Jamie fell back into Quirrell.

The impact seemed too great for the weakened man to handle because he toppled over onto Harry. The man screamed in agony as his skin made contact with Harry's. He pushed and shoved Jamie to get off of the boy. She flew off of the man and hit her head on the cold stone. Her hazel eyes rolled back into her head as she faded into unconsciousness once again.

Quirrell as much as he tried could not get away from Harry quick enough. The man burned and blisters sprang up over his skin. Within a few seconds all that was left of him were ashes. Harry still holding the stone stood up wobbling slightly. The ashes that lay next to him astounded him. He hurriedly walked up the steps intent of leaving but a rising fog caught his eye. Slowly the first year turned around to look at the remains of his DADA professor.

A ghostly spirit rose from the ashes portraying Voldemort's face. Harry screamed and fell back as the spirit flew right through him leaving a message in his mind. *I will be back.*

The stone fell out of his leaden hand and landed between Jamie and the ashes of Quirrell. His weight tilted back and he fell down the steps quite a distance away from the others.

Dumbledore and Severus burst into the room minutes later and took in the scene. Severus immediately rushed over to Harry and lifted the light boy into his arms. Dumbledore thought nothing of this. Severus was very protective of his Slytherins. Dumbledore levitated Jamie into the air and plucked the stone from the ground. In his old age the weights of children were far too heavy for his back.

Carefully Dumbledore placed the stone into his pocket and smiled at the girl-who-lived's prone body. "Thank you my dear. You have saved us all for now."

Severus sneered at the words and promptly left. He had far more important things to do at the moment. Things such as lecturing Draco and placing Harry in Madam Pomfrey's care.

Chapter 18

James' Plan

Harry woke up very sore. His limbs ached as if the very bone under his flesh had been beaten. As his eyes opened sharp beams of light blinded them forcing their lids to close. The fuzziness in the first year's mind ebbed away bringing back memories from the previous night. How had he ended up in the hospital wing? For that was surely where he was considering the hard bed, the spell of sterilizing potions, and the light patter of Madam Pomfrey's feet.

Harry once again forced his eyes open fighting against the sharp light of the sun. He tried to turn so that the sun would not shine in his face. This resulted in jostling his already smarting body. He must have made a noise. Madam Pomfrey was at his side in a heartbeat.

"Lie still. I expect your body is still sore. You took a rough fall last night boy. Be thankful no bones were broken!" She snapped lightly before bustling away to gather potions no doubt.

Within minutes the elderly witch was back at his side and shoving potions down his throat. Harry swallowed thickly knowing better than to irritate the already irate nurse. When at last she had retreated to her other patients Harry sighed in relief. Out of the corner of his eye he could see Jamie being woken and treated.

The redheaded child drank the potions with a grimace but made no move to complain. That...was very odd. Something about the Potter child was different than last night. Harry intended to find out as soon as Pomfrey left. It took almost half an hour before Harry and Jamie were left in their respective beds. Jamie had taken to lying back down with a far away look in her hazel eyes.

Harry took this chance to interrogate her. "Potter."

No answer.

“Potter, look at me when I’m talking to you.” His slightly arrogant tone made the girl glare at him.

“Why did you help Draco and I?” Harry asked starting small.

Jamie scoffed. “I couldn’t let you die now could I?”

Harry narrowed his eyes. “Why not? You could have easily gotten away with it.”

Jamie sat up and glared fully. “For one I needed your help to get to the stone. And secondly I don’t want anyone to die, except you-know-who. I may hate you Harry but that doesn’t mean you have to die.”

Surprise registered over Harry’s face. His former twin sister did not want him dead? “I didn’t know that.” He said rather stupidly.

Hazel eyes rolled heavenward. “Of course you didn’t. I never told you.” **That** also came out rather stupidly.

Harry decided to switch topics. “What do you remember from last night?”

“Why should I tell you?” She retorted rather snidely.

“I just want an accurate version of events.” Harry answered with infinite patience.

“I suppose that since you were there you deserve that much.” Jamie sat up completely her face overwhelmed with emotions. Harry didn’t know how she could stand being so open.

“After I ran into the fire I saw Quirrell. He used magic to push me in front of a huge mirror. It must have been enchanted or something because I saw myself but in the mirror I put a stone into my pocket. When he asked me what I saw I told him I saw myself and mummy, daddy and Dumbledore congratulating me for killing you-know-who. Then I remember this cold voice. It was awful. It told Quirrell to kill me. I tried running but he grabbed me.” Jamie took a deep breath here and stared directly into Harry’s emerald gaze. “The pain was so bad. Quirrell screamed and his hands blistered. I grabbed his face and he

turned to ash. Whatever I did must have tired me because I can't remember what happened after. I must have passed out." She declared her eyes still trained on Harry's.

Harry did his best to keep his face neutral. Voldemort had used a modification charm on her! Before he could think further back his ears picked up on the youngest Potter child talking once again.

"I was scared Harry." Jamie said softly.

Harry sneered. "Why are you telling me? Shouldn't you tell Dumbledore?"

Jamie seemed to snap back to reality and discover exactly who she was talking to. For a moment she looked sad but her face changed into anger just as quickly. She huffed noisily and lay back down heavily. Harry could tell she was obviously faking sleep as the Gryffindor turned her back on the boy. His face did not betray the fact that his mind was reeling. There was something more to Jamie than he had previously thought. He would have to keep a closer eye on her.

Thoughts of troubling sisters were pushed out of his mind as Draco walked in heading straight for Harry's bed. Pale lips lifted slightly to form a faint smile. Harry inclined his head in greeting. The pale blond sat down next to Harry's bed silently.

"Theo and Blaise wanted to come but they needed to finish up last minute assignments."

The light talk continued for a while. Harry was glad that Draco knew he was not up to talking of more pressing events. Eventually though they would talk and after a very miffed Severus would berate them. Harry shuddered to think about Severus. He was thankful that Narcissa would not get the same chance. Mentally he gave Draco his sympathies.

As their light conversation drew to a close Draco placed a mild silencing charm around the area they sat. This was the only charm they had practiced concerning areas. Harry would undeniably begin researching for stronger charms almost immediately.

“What happened in the last chamber?” Draco asked quietly.

And so Harry began to recount his tale, thankful that Draco did not question him. He told the blond everything except for the speech of alliances that had taken place. By the end Draco seemed satisfied. What little questions he had had on the little things were answered. Draco however was ever the Slytherin. He seemed to realize that a conversation had taken place. He questioned Harry briefly on it but when the raven-haired wizard did not reply he had left it alone.

Before Draco could question Harry any further Severus disillusioned himself. Harry try as he did could not keep his face blank. An expression of horror and anger turned his pale face even more vulnerable. Draco was having little more luck than Harry and openly gaped at Severus. Harry’s features turned into ones of seriousness.

“How much did you hear?” He asked hoarsely.

Draco closed his mouth and leaned against the bed as he turned to look at Severus. Said wizard looked at them with a blank expression. “Both of you will come with me to my quarters. We have **much** to discuss.” He stonily emphasized ‘much’ proving the theory that both boys were in for a right mind of scolding. “Start making your way to my rooms. I will inform Poppy of your discharge.”

They nodded too afraid to disobey. With some help from Draco, Harry was dressed in short time. Draco slung Harry’s arm around his shoulders as they walked because the boy himself was still quite weak. Thankfully the potions which had been forced down his throat had taken care of the aches leaving him only frail.

It took them almost double the time to get to Severus’ personal rooms due to their disability. When they entered the room Harry collapsed onto a sofa not bothering to hide his sigh of relief. Draco dropped down heavily next to him.

“We are in so much trouble.” The pale boy moaned leaning back into the comfortable furniture.

“I know that prat.” Harry snapped tetchily.

"It wasn't my fault." Draco reminded him.

After expelling a small sigh and calming down Harry grasped Draco's hand lightly. "I know. I'm sorry. Severus knows though. He's bound to ask questions. I hope that he won't tell anyone, especially Dumbledore."

Draco omitted a frustrated noise. He turned slightly angry grey eyes onto Harry. "He wouldn't do that!"

"Why not?" Harry retorted sounding stubborn and idiotic even to himself.

It was Draco's turn to sigh. "Because... the trust is mutual between the Slytherins and him. Severus trusts us as much as we trust him."

"We'll see." Harry responded closing his eyes warily.

He had known the stoic man for only one school year. He could not trust him completely with one of his biggest secrets. Draco's words echoed in his head making guilt rise up his throat. Harry respected the potions master and even trusted him somewhat. But this secret, this one little secret was indeed a humungous issue. This would be the ultimate test of faith.

Severus showed up ten minutes later looking further frustrated than before. It seemed that Madam Pomfrey was not at all pleased with the arrangements. The fact that Harry had left even before a final check up seemed to be one too many snapped straws for the mediwitch. She had ranted and raved at Severus before firmly kicking him out of the infirmary.

Now that he had finally gotten away from her dragon like grasp the real trouble began. He glared at the two meek boys sitting on a sofa. Gasping his wand delicately the elder wizard conjured an armchair for himself. The way he sat was no less graceful, no less elegant than always. The only things that expressed his anger were his eyes.

“Explain yourselves!” He snapped. Without waiting for an explanation he continued. “Why would you so foolishly go on such a reckless trip? I am ashamed to see two of my top students acting like *Gryffindors*.” Severus hissed making both boys wince. “Do you know the dangers of the position you so imprudently put yourselves in? Such behavior normally would have gotten any student expelled. Luck however was on your side. Dumbledore’s convinced that you helped Potter and will relieve you of your punishment.”

“Sev...” Draco began but stopped as the wizard glared at him.

“We had to.” Harry finished.

“Yes, being the boy-who-lived does that to you doesn’t it. It contradicts all reason and pushed forth the legendary Gryffindor courage.” His voice was mocking.

Harry frowned. “If I hadn’t gone then I might have sealed my future with death.”

Severus stopped his pacing and turned his obsidian gaze onto Harry. “Why did you not come to me with this?”

“I wasn’t sure who to trust. Draco knew about this by accident.” Green eyes turned to look at grey. “In a way it was nice that someone could help me. I didn’t want to tell anymore people than I needed to. So far no one else has needed to know. Voldemort found out because he can sense our connection. Quirrell knew for obvious reasons but he is now dead. No one else knows and it will stay that way.” Harry insisted his eyes blazing. “Not only does this put me in danger, it puts you in danger.”

Severus blinked at the fear in Harry’s voice. He had not expected that last sentence. Cursing himself for his conscious Severus knelt in front of Harry and took his remaining hand. “My safety is my concern. As your head of house it is my objective to take care of my students. Such problems should have been revealed before now. I could have helped ease your burden.”

Harry nodded slightly. Severus released his hand and stood up looming darkly over them. “We will discuss this after you have rested.

In two days you shall be leaving for your homes. As you have nowhere to go Harry, I offer you a room at Snape Manor."

Harry smiled tiredly. "Thank you sir."

They were interrupted by the whooshing sound of fire erupting. The fireplace now held a small green fire. In the center a small scroll of parchment floated, its edges were slightly singed. Severus deftly plucked it out of the fire place and quickly read its contents. His lips tightened in a frown.

"The headmaster is expecting Harry and I." He rolled the parchment and threw it into the fire once again. This time it caught fire and shriveled into ashes. "Draco return to your rooms. I expect you to stay out of trouble."

Together, Severus and Harry walked to the headmaster's office. A small feeling of foreboding lodged in their heads. Whatever the headmaster wished of them was not going to be enjoyable.

James Potter, auror and Cornelius Fudge, minister of magic brushed themselves off lightly as they stepped out of the fireplace in Dumbledore's office. The wizened man smiled, his eyes twinkling. "Good afternoon James, Cornelius! Would you like a lemon drop?"

James took one of the sour candies while Fudge declined. "What brings you to Hogwarts gentlemen?"

Fudge cleared his throat. "We are here to declare the ministry's word on one of your students."

"And who may this student be?" Dumbledore leaned back into his chair, the twinkle in his eyes blinding.

"Harry no name." James declared. "As he has no guardian and is not of age, the boy is the ministry's ward. The minister and I have worked together to find him a suitable arrangement for the summer holidays."

The twinkle dimmed somewhat in the azure eyes of the headmaster. He did not know Harry as well as he might have but he recalled the day of the disowning ceremony clearly. James although being like a son to him was a bit blinded in his hatred towards the boy. But perhaps this would work out for the best. Harry was after all a Slytherin. He could make do in whatever environment the minister decreed preeminent.

“Summon the boy Albus.” Cornelius puffed out his chest and looked at his watch annoyingly.

“Perhaps his head of house should be present as well.” Dumbledore mused out loud. In his loopy handwriting he composed a brief pleasant letter and sent it off through the floo system. The Hogwarts fires could only be used to floo to the headmaster’s office. They would not allow anyone to enter or leave the castle. The only fire at Hogwarts that held that power was the headmaster’s own.

“Chocolate Frogs.” Severus spoke lowly.

He did not wait for Harry as he stormed up the steps barely missing the gargoyle at it jumped out of the way. Harry followed hastily trying in vain to match his Professor’s strides. Severus waited impatiently at the door for the boy and gave him a dark look before swiftly opening the rough wooden door and entering the office.

Inside neither Severus or Harry showed their surprise at the waiting visitors. A myriad of emotions passed through Harry; wariness-anger-foreboding-shock-fear. Dumbledore inclined his head in greeting while James and Fudge glared.

“Ah Severus, Harry. Please take a seat my dear boys. Would you care for a lemon drop? No, very well. It has come to my attention of late that the ministry wishes to offer you a residence for the summer holidays.”

James interrupted him rudely. "We're not offering anything. This will be your permanent home boy and you will go. According to law the ministry has custody over all orphans and underage individuals who have no guardians or parents."

The fear within Harry spiked up drastically. Severus glared at the elder Potter. "I will take guardianship over my student." He spoke indifferently.

Fudge cleared his throat. "You cannot do that. I have already accepted the proposition that Mr. Potter has offered him. He is quite generous for taking concern of this *boy* personally. He will be going to the Molwogs Center."

"I believe that is the disciplinary center for underage wizards." James spoke his eyes taking a nasty glint. "It's the best place for you Harry. You will be taken there by the train arriving at Platform 10 $\frac{1}{4}$."

Severus intervened. "Minister there are several laws which would approve my vouch for Harry. I am certified to be his legal guardian, surely you know of these." His voice was stoic and held an edge.

Fudge smiled widely. "Yes, well those were changed by myself. As I have already spoken for the boy, you cannot do anything to stop this from happening. By the new law the boy must attend Molwogs center this summer." His malevolent eyes turned to look at Harry who had gone pale. "Well boy, off you go! Start packing!"

Harry could not move. Fortunately he didn't have to move as a burst of flame caught them off guard. They were surprised to see none other than Charlie Weasley step out of the fire. An aggravated expression was on his face as he brushed the soot off of his robe. His hazel eyes swiveled upward and caught sight of the office's occupants. He offered a sheepish smile.

"Hullo there. Sorry for the interruption. I needed to talk with Professor Snape about a potion." A tanned hand brushed through shaggy red locks.

James grinned. He always liked the Weasleys. "It's no problem at all Charlie. We were just telling Harry here that he is to go to Molwogs for the summer."

Charlie grimaced and hesitantly spoke. "The disciplinary center? What good will that do?"

"He needs to be punished for the crimes he has instigated." Fudge answered promptly.

The second eldest Weasley smiled lopsidedly. "Well in that case he can always come with me to the Dragon Facility. We're in need of some hands and it'll be perfect for discipline. The work to be done so far involves manual labor and cleaning the dung piles. Oh! And we also need someone to count the materials and take stock of them."

A small frown appeared on James' face as he considered the offer. *The Weasleys have always been reliable. Plus the boy will be near Dragons. If we're lucky he might get burnt.* When his thoughts started taking a more vindictive turn James abruptly stopped them.

"Minister would it possible for Harry to work for Charlie instead?" James questioned.

Fudge nodded. "It has only been said he is to reside in a place offering discipline. Molwogs is quite full anyways."

"Well then! It's decided that Harry shall go with Charlie then." Dumbledore broke out smiling slightly.

James stood up and grinned at Charlie. "Thanks for taking him."

"No problem, he'll do his fair share of work for whatever he needs." Charlie offered slapping the bespectacled man on the back heartily. Fudge nodded at Dumbledore and Charlie. "Well we must be off. Things to do you see." They disappeared through the fireplace.

"Well Professor I still need to ask you about some potions." Charlie said.

“Harry will accompany you to the dungeons. You’re dimwitted mind would easily have you lost in the maze.” Severus spoke neutrally.

The duo left the office immediately knowing better than to disagree with the potions master. Severus turned to Albus.

“When did the great Albus Dumbledore allow children to be put into volatile arrangements?” He spoke, spite lining his tone. Severus glared at the headmaster and turned to leave.

The noise of his departure however could not drown out Dumbledore’s parting words. “Adoption is always an option Severus.” A regretful twinkle shone in his brilliant azure eyes as he watched Severus stalk out of the office.

Inside office in the cold dungeons Charlie and Harry sat. They had not spoken of the meeting that had occurred choosing to wait until Severus came. In the meantime however Charlie had asked Harry simple questions about his health and studies. They were saved from having to force talk as the dark lanky man known as Severus Snape entered his office.

“Explain now.” He snarled looking at the freckled redhead.

Said wizard did not ask of his bad mood and launched into an explanation. “Dad told me about James and Fudge cocking up some plan to send Harry to a disciplinary center. Well with the help he gave Hagrid and me with the dragon I decided to help him out.”

Severus arched a brow. “It seems you have some brains yet Mr. Weasley.”

“Charlie, and thank you. By the way Harry, you won’t have to do work unless you want to. Sometimes we might ask for your help if we need it. Fudge may send someone over to check up on you so you’ll have to play the part for a couple of hours but other than that you can enjoy the sights and look at the dragons sometime.”

Harry nodded dazedly. "Thank you for doing this Charlie. You didn't have to but you did." He beamed at the older wizard.

The well tanned man stood and returned the grin. "No problem kiddo." He shook Harry's hand. "I'll pick you up at Kings Cross the day after tomorrow."

"Good day Charlie." Severus shook his hand as well.

Harry managed to get back to his rooms shortly before curfew. Waiting for him clad in pajamas were Blaise, Theo and Draco.

"What did Dumbledore want?" The blond asked leaning forward as he hoisted himself onto his forearms.

"Potter and Fudge were there to condemn me." Harry replied sinking next to Blaise who placed an arm about his shoulders. Harry did not notice as he continued. "They wanted to send me to Molwogs Center. It's a disciplinary home for underage wizards who have no guardians or parents. Severus vouched for me but Fudge said it couldn't be done because he had declared his word official and therefore law. Charlie Weasley showed up however and changed their minds. So now I'll be going to a Dragon Facility in Romania."

"That will be interesting to say the least." Theo supplied still a bit shocked by the turn of events.

Draco offered a smile but you could tell it didn't reach his eyes. "I suppose we'll have to wait till school starts again to see you then."

Blaise shrugged. "You never know Draco, Weasley might let him visit us."

Normally it would have been Draco who reassured Harry but this time both could see that it needed to be the other way around. "Charlie's nice he might let me." Harry moved out from underneath Blaise's arm and sat next to Draco. He could tell his best friend was sad by the

separation. "It won't be long Draco. You'll see. We'll be back here and plotting before you know it."

Grey eyes lit up in amusement. "Plotting?" They looked at each other and broke out in laughter. "I suppose you could call it plotting. Next year we must try and steal that map from Potter Jr. It could be trouble for us later on if that twit still has it."

Grinning slightly Blaise and Theo left the two boys. This time Blaise's arm was slung around Theo who glared at the offending appendage but did not remove it. Harry slipped into his own pajamas and curled up under the warm sheets of his bed. That night all four boys slept with a lighter heart.

The Slytherins walked in an orderly fashion as they stepped into the great hall. The time had come for the leaving feast. Harry, Draco, Blaise and Theodore sat down near the end of the table. At the end of the feast the rush to leave would be great and by sitting near the end they had quicker access to the doors.

Dumbledore cleared his throat and stood. His silver beard sparkled in the lighting. "Alas! It is the end of another spectacular year however eventful it was. Hopefully our noggins have reduced in fluff and filled with knowledge that shall last us years." Dumbledore's twinkling eyes roamed the sea of students.

"Now I believe that the house cup needs awarding! The points awarded are as follows: in third place, Hufflepuff, with three hundred and fifty two; in third, Gryffindor, with three hundred and fifty two; in second, Ravenclaw, with four hundred and twenty six; and in first we have Slytherin house with four hundred and seventy two."

The Slytherins did not jump nor bang their glasses but politely, yet enthusiastically clapped. Small smug smiles and smirks marred their faces. Their manners where like a blow to the other houses who had wildly cheered their houses.

Dumbledore raised his hand for silence. "Well done Slytherin. But, we have some last minute points to award for certain events must be counted. First I would like to award 10 points to Ronald Weasley for loyalty to his friends." The Gryffindors cheered as they were officially secured third place as their own.

Silence fell upon the hall as he spoke once more. "Second I would like to award Hermione Granger 10 points for doing what was right over her morals regarding the rules. It takes little to break the rules but to do so when they are so ethically imperative to you takes much courage." Hermione smiled shyly.

"Third I would like to award Harry of Slytherin house 10 points. You may not succeed in the attempts you make but to attempt them takes boldness."

The Slytherins glared at the headmaster for daring to demean one of their own. The Slytherins, although having heard the tale of what had happened, did not believe it entirely. There were flaws and the reason why Harry went down there in the first place was never mentioned. The students put this from their mind as Dumbledore called for silence.

"And last but not least I would like to mention the student that has once again saved us. One of our own has stood so bravely and deserves such recognition." He winked at Jamie Potter. "Jamie Potter will receive a Special Award for Services to the School and 60 points. I applaud your bravery in the face of danger. Let us drink to your heroic deeds."

Not one snake raised their goblet. They sat with stony silence that was frowned upon by all but Severus who simply sat emotionlessly. The only thing that consoled the pupils of Slytherin house was that they had still won the house cup, and the Quidditch cup. While Harry had been in the hospital wing they had used Adrian Pucey as the substitute seeker. As they were playing Hufflepuff it was an easy game which had secured their place once again as champions of the Quidditch cup. To say they were proud was an understatement.

At the far end of the Hogwarts Express sat four boys. They had opened their books and started working on summer homework. The amount that had been issued left more work than possible to complete in a single day. Using logic the soon to be second years had begun early and had completed most of their homework. In the time it would take to reach Kings Cross all four would be completed and free to enjoy their summer.

Harry was excited to see the dragons. He had only seen Norbert but the dragon had crawled its way into his heart. Magical creatures fascinated him to no end. And from what Hagrid had told him Charlie had done exceptionally well in Care of Magical Creatures. This summer was not only going to be educational but fun. Live mature dragons only seemed to add to that excitement. He couldn't wait to go with Charlie.

Conveniently for him the hours in the train passed by quickly as they applied themselves into their work. An hour before the train would stop the quartet had finished the essays, charts and reading that had been assigned. For the rest of the journey Harry and Draco were content to sit back as watch Theo and Blaise play exploding snap.

As the train came to a stop the four couldn't help but gather their trunks and quickly rush out onto the station. It was good to be going home for the purebloods and for Harry it felt good to know someone besides the Slytherins cared. The Notts saw them first. Theodore smiled warmly as he looked at his parents.

Lady Nott was a bit on the short side at 5'5 and was slightly round in an attractive way. She had a kind face and short curly locks of mousy hair. Her face was rounded and as she smiled her plump lips stretched beautifully over her face. She had a healthy skin tone and dark brown eyes.

Lord Nott seemed to match perfectly with his kind looking wife. He had a mature rosy face and his light brown eyes seemed to sparkle with mischief. He stood at an average height of 5'10 and was stocky. His hair attracted many people, it was shoulder length and curly. The dark red fiery mane tied back neatly into a ponytail and would shine a

brilliant orange-red when the light hit it. It gave the effect that his hair was the same color of fire.

This suited his name. He spoke first and introduced himself. "Pyro Nott. Theo has told us much about you three." The fiery man smiled wickedly promising many humorous things should they visit.

Theo's mother rolled her eyes and sharply elbowed her husband. "Don't scare them off." She smiled her lovely smile once again and turned to the boys. "Kyra Nott. Do come visit us at Nott Manor sometime. Our Theodore gets quite lonely by himself."

Harry, Draco and Blaise nodded dutifully smiling. Mrs. Nott had an infectious smile and generally made people feel welcome. The Zabinis spotted them next and soon appeared at their side.

Matia Zabini and Niro Zabini introduced themselves nodded slightly. Like Matia, Niro was tanned and tall. His slightly curly black hair matched nicely with his goatee, sharp features and almost black eyes. He stood at 5'11 and was muscular. The Zabinis unfortunately had to leave reminding the Notts that they too were being expected elsewhere. Blaise and Theodore bid their friends goodbye and left the platform.

Draco and Harry had been waiting only moments before the Malfoys showed up. Narcissa swept the boys into hugs and smiled widely at them. Lucius stood back and nodded to the boys. Draco at Harry's permission told his parents of the meeting with James Potter and Cornelius Fudge. At both Narcissa's and Draco's insistence they waited with Harry for Charlie.

Lucius spotted him first being the tallest. His sharp grey eyes saw him making his way from the opposite end of the platform through the horde towards them. Charlie grinned when he saw Harry.

"Sorry about the wait, one of the baby dragons accidentally nipped its brother. Poor thing needed to be looked after immediately."

Harry listened intently while Draco smirked. He knew that Harry would enjoy it with Charlie. Both were hooked on magical beasts. Charlie finally stopped talking and looked at Narcissa and Lucius.

“Sorry for being rude. Charlie Weasley.” He extended a hand which Narcissa shook. Lucius reluctantly shook the proffered hand. “I’ll be taking Harry here now. Thanks for waiting with him.”

Harry waved goodbye to Draco who smiled slightly. *This summer was going to be an interesting one for sure.* Harry thought as he followed Charlie past the magical barrier.

END YEAR 1

A/N:

Thanks go to Martin for being such a wonderful beta!

This will continue in it's sequel AAUII. It's a separate story.